

Who the Ever-Loving F*** Made Me A Prince?

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Who the Ever-Loving F*** Made Me A Prince?

by [sherashalala](#)

Summary

Tommy wakes up in a book he's read once before, now casted as an infant prince named Theseus-- that would have been fine if this infant isn't destined to die at the age of fifteen by the hands of his own royal brother.

Tommy as Theseus will not have that.

He'll be changing a few things in here. For one, he will not be called Theseus. That's such a gaudy name. Who the hell chose that-? Oh right.

The brother who is going to execute him.

OR The SBI Who Made Me A Princess AU we all needed.

OR OR Tommy gets stuck inside a book and he has to use childish charm to change fate.

UNDERGOING EDITS

Notes

I saw art made by Shmeck [SBI with jewel eyes!](#) and got VERY INSPIRED to make a Who Made Me A Princess AU

(Check out her art too, they're so poggers. I feed on her art.)

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

The Prince of Song? More like prince of SHI--

THE PALACE COURTIERS WERE FLUTTERING ABOUT. Much like worker ants preparing a hive, the courtiers worked in an organized ruckus. They were preparing a whole palace, after all. Maids, swordsmen, culinary artists, and courtiers preparing for something seemingly grand.

“What do you think we’re rushing for?”

“The third prince, but you didn’t hear that from me.”

“There’s a third prince?”

The courtiers stand in wait along the entrance, waiting before the grand doors of this new palace that had been rushed yet well-built. It had been the direct orders of the Imperial Prince. They were attentive as they stand. All of them were assigned to something so grand, after all, if it had been the direct orders of the Imperial Prince himself.

It might have seemed that they couldn’t look any more proper to face and greet royalty, maybe even a god, but they had straightened their backs further upon hearing the grand doors click.

Someone important was arriving. They were curious to see who.

As the door opened, there were no escorts, nor were there any grandeur or ceremony. Not even a servant to announce the newly arrived presence.

Silence. Not even a sound of a foot meeting the newly polished marble floors.

One by one, the servants’ heads turned towards the door. Normally such impudence would be greeted with a scolding, but they knew that maybe it would have been worth it.

Because before them was an esteemed swordswoman—a Captain, even. One of them, they might argue, judging by what she’d once insisted; but based on the bundle of fabric and whatever it is holding, she was assigned to an extremely precious job.

“Captain Puffy,” One of them broke away from the line, looking over her with a confused expression. “Captain, may I ask what we were brought here for?”

Puffy, once the Captain of the Royal Guard, looks at them all with a stern expression.

“We are brought here upon the orders of the *Emperor*,” She watches as the faces of courtiers shift from shock, to awe, and finally, dread, “to raise, protect, and care for the youngest Prince.”

The Captain looks down at the bundle, unwrapping the golden cloth from his face, and looking back up at the lot of them.

“The Third Prince, *Theseus*.”

AND THESEUS had looked up at his older brother. His jeweled blue eyes were as cold as the Blood Prince's heart.

“You will never understand the love I have for my brother, Imperial Prince.” Theseus speaks his truth, with nothing but poison and hatred for the older brother whose warmth he once sought for. “I would rather die than attempt at his life.”

The eldest prince looks down at Theseus.

“How fortunate. You have sought to do both.”

Before the public's eye—and that had included an incapable and inconsolable William, their Imperial, ruthless, Blood Prince had drawn his sword. He raised it mockingly against Theseus' cheek. “Greet mother for me. She will be pleased to meet you.” He says to Theseus, yet no one but themselves are able to hear.

And he had withdrawn his sword for a moment. William was relieved—had his twin reconsidered this act, perhaps?

The hope kindled for a moment. Had his songs reached his brother? William's pride swells in his chest, yet if only for the briefest moment.

The sword to drops to Theseus' neck.

“Theseus,” A woman with a maid's headcap coos at him, who is notably not supposed to be called Theseus and is instead *Tommy*. “What a precious boy,” She continues. “I really have no idea what is going on with your older brother.”

Tommy attempts to swat at the woman, but the act isn't quick nor is it anything nearly as fatal. “*Screw off!*” He had attempted to say, but it had only resulted to regular garble. The sneer he attempts to make had looked nothing intimidating, and merely *adorable*.

She smiles back at him, blissfully unaware of his attempts at her life or at her self-esteem.

Tommy would have rolled his eyes if his body allowed it. The interaction has shaken out his fear that had come from lines in a book he read before. He should keep his mind out of that. It's not his concern right now.

Right now, he's facing a tougher adversary.

Infanthood.

“She would have loved you.” She says rather ominously.

Tommy thinks it's dumb. Everyone loves him, obviously. He doesn't have need for affirmation.

But most importantly, he's not *supposed* to be here.

Prior to waking up as a mere infant, Tommy was falling. He remembers it vaguely, but he's pretty sure he's supposed to be dead right now. Tommy remembers dying in something cold, because the impact from the fall was apparently not enough to kill him in one go. He only needed to freeze a little before finally succumbing to the sweet, supposedly everlasting embrace of death.

He really did feel content in it.

It was nice, warm, and comfortable.

But death had let go of him all of a sudden, and here he is. He'd awoken from his supposed eternal sleep like this: a child.

A child with a cursed name—*Theseus*. That had been the name of the youngest prince in the novel, and that had been the name of a tragic hero before. Tommy knows very little about a Theseus who lived a long and happy life, but he intends to make it that way.

He doesn't want to be like the other Theseus-es. Poor fucks.

"Theseus, darling, are you hungry?" His caretaker asks, breaking him out of his lament-filled stupor.

Tommy frowns, lifting his arms and shaking it across instead of up and down. He can't shake his head, annoyingly so. His neck muscles were too young. "*No!*" He answers as an act of rebelling, but all it releases is a vague sound of multiple vowels and a pop of his lip.

This leads to his next lament.

Couldn't he have woken up as a more mobile kid?

Did he have to wake up as a fucking *infant*?

The woman frowns for a reason that Tommy has no idea about, then looks up at the grandfather clock that serves to be his only companion most of the time.

He tries to look at it as well, before giving up. He's a weakling. He's admitting it to himself, but not to anyone else. He's a little squishy weakling, and he abhors it with a passion.

She looks back down at Tommy with a smile. "I'll be calling the head maid, okay?" Is all she says before walking away and out that door.

Tommy stays, because where else would an immobile infant go? To the End? (He hopes. Maybe he'll have a better time there than here).

The maid returns, but there is someone else with her. Puffy, he recognizes his ram-horned companion. She treats him at least properly, with the slightest belief that Tommy is at least a fraction smarter than a typical child his age.

Which is good because he's *sixteen*.

"Hello there, Theseus!" Puffy greets with a smile. "Have you been troubling the maid?"

Puffy is the Head Maid, but the way she holds herself and the way that the people act around her makes Tommy suspect that she's actually more than that. He's yet to find out what, exactly, but he knows that she's got some form of power over the others that frequent around the place.

Tommy babbles, practicing his speech and hoping that one day he'd get it right—to *no avail*, of course, because he's an infant.

She smiles. "Okay, can you do the thing you did when you were asked if you were hungry?"

Tommy shakes his hands left and right (embarrassingly not in synch).

"Are you bored?"

He pauses a little, feeling a little tired from all the shaking she was making him do, before now shaking his hands up and down. All the while babbling.

The woman nods, before instead carrying Tommy into her arms. "He isn't hungry." She explains. "He's bored."

Internally, Tommy feels himself sag in relief. He clutches to her chest, alarmed at the height he was at.

Finally, someone who gets him.

That was until he felt his stomach grumble. Tommy feels himself redden.

"Or he was lying." Puffy teases.

Life in the palace is surprisingly easy as an infant. There's not much that Tommy has to do other than babble and act cute in hopes that maybe they wouldn't treat him like stool at the side of road.

It's been an uneventful few months since he's been rudely woken up and shoved into this infant body. Now he is at least able to crawl. He sits up, and he exercises regularly. Crawling doesn't take much to learn, but it did take a while to finally gain the muscles required for the act. Being an infant was such hard work, he doesn't know why so much people hope to be one again.

Tommy sits on Puffy's lap. She is pointing images to him and assigning them things.

He'd long since learned about that, and he would push each book he didn't like off her hands until he finally gets something of interest.

To Puffy's credit, she's patient enough to last until Tommy finally settled on a book that had piqued his interest.

Politics.

He doesn't know how Puffy managed to pick this up, but he shouldn't discredit her. She seems to trust his judgement and that he is smarter than he seems.

"Your lineage, Theseus." She said when she'd settled with this book. "I think this would be of interest to you, do you agree?"

Fortunately for him, and especially fortunate for the tired Puffy, Tommy does agree.

And so Puffy takes her time pointing out the political system, and she explains it so concisely, as if she doesn't expect Tommy to understand what she was saying.

He does, though, so he learns a lot.

So, their country of residence was the Empire of Ice (*eerily familiar*, Tommy had thought.) and Tommy is known to be the Second Prince. Puffy shows a picture of the emperor.

He's an odd thing for an emperor. The portrait shows sapphire jewel eyes that glitter in the light in such a majestic manner—as if his eyes were actually made of the finest riches of the world. "Phil is an odd emperor," Puffy snorts, as if what she's saying could not at all be considered treason punishable by death. "He's not here often, no one knows why, but he comes back now and then. People call him the emperor despite the ruler being your brother, the Imperial Prince."

Tommy listens as he observes the portrait. The man is youthful despite his age—apparently centuries old as it is—and he's got golden hair that reaches down his shoulders. His eyes are a glittering sapphire, as mentioned a while ago, and Tommy has no clue if it's an artistic depiction or not. The crown is crooked on his head, as if it was placed there haphazardly, but the air of confidence and charisma screams royalty to Tommy.

He babbles as he slams on the photo.

"Yes, Theseus, that's your father." She laughs, guiding his small hands to the portrait.

He frowns. That's not what he meant.

In reality, what Tommy was saying was "*You bastard, leaving your kid here all alone without family to care for me.*" He speaks. "*A proper shithead.*"

Puffy turns a few pages, and Tommy sees how it skips the portrait of a brunette woman with violet eyes, and another brunette with sparkling blue eyes. He doesn't mind it, because if

Puffy skipped it then he likely doesn't need to know much about them.

She stops to another portrait, and it's a man with pink hair cascading over his shoulder in a neatly done braid. Some locks of hair have escaped the braid, framing his face. He notices how even compared to Philza, his crown was fancier, and dare he say *gaudy*.

But what catches his attention are his ruby eyes. It has the same jewel effect as Phil's, and Tommy's starting to think that these weren't just stylistic decisions and more alike to reality than he thinks.

"That's your brother, Theseus." Puffy points. She moves to the name labelled underneath it, and Tommy, an adult in a child's body who has long learned how common speak functions, had read it. "No one really knows his true name, other than Philza himself."

He drowns out everything Puffy is saying, as he realizes his imminent doom.

"And the name labelled here isn't his true name, rather his preferred title. We don't know of it's origins either, but well, it's struck the fear of the Empire's enemies." She laughs, as if Tommy wasn't looking at the source of his eventual demise.

"His name is Technoblade! Your older brother."

The Prince of Song.

It was an unassuming title of a book that not many of Tommy's peers have read before-- not that the lot of them were interested in that sort of genre. It was novel centered on a character of noble heritage, and it wasn't a very fond topic for many of his friends and kin. Monarchy and Empires weren't favorable for many of the people Tommy was acquainted with, and even the political system in the novel was far fetched and not like the ones he's seen before.

But Tommy had picked it up,

There were a lot of things Tommy would like to say about it.

For all the odd descriptions of its form of extreme 'Monarchy', Tommy found himself at the very least liking it. It has adequate writing (which is a lot to say for his standard of literature, because Tommy was raised on Greek mythos and his literary fanatic brother), and the story was acceptable.

It was centered on a cruel and lone prince in an Empire of Ice (uncreatively titled the Antarctic Empire. He personally thinks it's lame and would prefer the Empire of Ice title) and his estranged twin brother, who had gone missing from birth.

The estranged prince had gone to the palace to dethrone the Imperial Prince, yet upon arrival, he found himself becoming fond his brother and instead settling on the decision that he should instead change him. The estranged prince had been met with many dilemmas of the

royal life. It's centered a lot on humanitarian ways and a lot on the grey morality that one has to have when handling politics concerning millions upon millions of subjects.

He didn't think it odd how it only briefly mentions an Emperor, and how it seemed like the acting ruler of the Empire was the eldest prince instead. He also didn't think it odd how the familial dynamic was also very much implied and mentioned repeatedly.

So far, the important characters were the twins—one raised in riches, and the other in rags.

They weren't the only children of the Emperor (as absent as he may seem). There were three. The twin princes, and the youngest, unloved prince. The canon fodder.

For the sake of plot progression, whoever the author was had decided to just off the poor kid.

His only purpose in the plot was to drive the estranged prince who loved him into finally overthrowing the Imperial Prince who had ordered the lone prince's death.

Tommy had some semblance of sympathy when he read that part. He recalls that much. It was sad, but really if Tommy was in his place, he would have been louder, more demanding, more assertive of the truth.

He was a prince, for Prime's sake. Act like it.

But it was really nothing beyond a moment of sympathy. It was nothing special, nor is it something that he should really mind. It was fictional, after all, even if he'd formed a little bit of attachment for the poor kid. He paused for like five minutes after the youngest prince's execution, before continuing.

The plot continues with the estranged twin brother overthrowing the Imperial prince, and thus ruling the empire instead of him. Due to some plot armor, the Imperial Prince is never killed and is instead trapped in an undisclosed location that even the readers aren't privy to knowing.

And voila, happy ending, the acting ruler is replaced with a pacifist and kind ruler, and that's it.

Tommy closed the book, leaves it on his bookshelf to be forgotten forever, and went on with his life that concerns very little amounts of monarchy and chaos and execution.

It was nothing special, truly.

So why is it that Tommy finds himself in the body of this unloved prince? Tommy pauses at that, letting the information sink in and sponge into his childish brain. He firmly places his hand on either side of the book, making sure that Puffy doesn't move it until he's made sense of his situation.

He looks up to Puffy, and points at his eyes—which had only resulted to Tommy smacking his under lid with his fingers. It hurt, but this was a very important question that he hopes Puffy would understand. To further show the importance of his question, Tommy babbles.

And thankfully, for whatever reason the deities that sent him down here had, she *did* understand.

“Oh! I realize that you’ve never seen your reflection, have you?” She laughs, before fishing something from her pockets. She brings out a little pocket-mirror, something small and convenient that folds into two so it can fit a pocket.

She opens it and turns it to Tommy. “That’s you, Theseus!” Puffy says with a smile and chipper tone. “Look, you look just like your brother.” She says it like it’s a good thing.

He sees himself, and he sees blond hair (much like Phil’s), and glittering, blue, jewel eyes.

Oh fuck.

Oh *shit*.

Tommy’s frustrations had finally spilled from his small, infant-sized body.

He outright bawls, sending Puffy into a panic because Tommy *rarely* ever cries, much less a full out bawling.

Tommy’s pride wouldn’t let that happen, of course, because he’s not a kid.

But this situation calls for it.

He’s going to get executed for fuck’s sake.

Blood Prince

Chapter Summary

Who is Tommy if not a nuisance to his own plans?

THESEUS WAS SEVEN YEARS OLD when he first met a member of his family. The boy, prior to this meeting, had not really cared for the lack of kin in his surroundings, but his caretaker had told him all about them. He did not care, because why would a seven-year-old child long for something so trivial as family? Why would he, when he has other concerns in his own Palace?

He was in the garden after having wandered around for too long. There was very little that he could do in his spare time, after all, because other than his tutors who were unwillingly there for his education, the maids had no interest in mingling with the unloved prince. His toys have been taken already, since he was told that he was past the age for petty toys.

In reality, they had stolen these treasures and sold them for riches.

Little Theseus had not minded, because this was what little he could offer to the people who were doomed in serving such a prince. He is belittling to be with, is what he was told.

Yet he had a shift in paradigm the moment he's laid eyes on the first prince, his eldest brother, Technoblade.

Theseus was lost, and he had unknowingly crossed the border between the Emerald palace and the Sapphire palace. So, when he sees his elder brother's large and confident stride, the glimmer of his ruby eyes that commanded respect, the way that everyone had withered away at the side of his brother, Theseus could not believe himself.

He was related to this man, the Imperial Prince.

And for the briefest moment, a moment that Theseus would never forget in his life, the Imperial Prince had locked eyes with Theseus.

The little prince could feel his heart stop, as if it had also taken a moment to fully believe this moment.

He had only ignored the little prince.

But that moment was **everything** for little Theseus.

Tommy finds himself cringing at that memory. He's this wimp? What happened to 'don't judge a book by its cover'? This Theseus kid *saw* his brother and decided to dedicate his entire life to this image, only for this kid to get slain by this man because he got accused of killing the brother who *actually* loves him?

Trash. Trash novel. Trash 'family dynamic'. Trash. The lot of it.

Will Tommy change it? No, because Theseus was *canon fodder*. He wasn't vital to the plot. The Imperial Prince would have killed *anyone* after being pissed off and William would call him out on this bullshit, and then dethrone him.

He won't be changing the plot. If anything, he'll be speeding it up because whichever poor fuck gets accused of killing William will take less steps until the execution. So, he won't be changing anything at all with his genius plan.

Which was to *book it out of there*.

The infantilized Tommy-Theseus crawls around, ignoring how his knees might burn. He's building resistance while he plots. Tommy ignores how Puffy, who had resigned to being the constant companion of Theseus after Tommy had decided not to deal with inadequate caretakers, looks at him fondly as he circles around on the carpet.

He babbles as he moves. He has to take verbal note of his plans, after all.

The Imperial Prince, more informally known as the Blood Prince, and personally known as Prince Technoblade. He is a cruel prince, and the acting ruler of the Antarctic Empire, the Empire of Ice. Even so, many acknowledges his atypical method of ruling as effective. The empire thrives, yet it thrives at the cost of a bloodshed of its own greedy people.

That leads to the other name of the Sapphire palace, which was the *Ruby court*. With color alone, one could associate bloodshed with its origins. That is correct. This was the palace where tyrant dukes were called over, and the Prince Technoblade had killed them all off.

(Tommy personally hates this logic. Sure, dickhead, drop your youngest twin brother in your slaughterhouse. Pig bastard.)

Corruption is not an issue here. The people of the Empire pride themselves on that.

Tommy thinks that it's bullshit.

Corruption is definitely an issue here, because it's a monarchy damn it. To think that despite the complaints of the palace court, the pig bastard had out and murdered his own brother.

Of course, Little Theseus does not know that.

At the age of seven, Theseus will have his presence known by Technoblade. He does not want that. Tommy doesn't know if Technoblade had remembered that moment, or if it mattered at all to Technoblade, but Tommy *does* know that he should not exist in

Technoblade's mind. Zero. None at all. Theseus who? This would make his plans of escape easy.

So far, he has a simple set of plans. A through D.

A. Acquire enough riches and stash them. Make sure not to be known. Escape at the ripe age of Nine. This will make escape easier because they won't know what they're missing in the first place.

B. Acquire enough riches and stash them up to the point where William appears into the story. That way, he won't have any monetary problems *and* his disappearance would be shadowed by the fact that William is there. They'll focus on his presence!

C. Appeal to the idea of overthrowing the Imperial Prince and stay by William's side so there's the protagonist's plot armor extended over to him.

D. Appeal to the Imperial Prince just enough that he *wouldn't* kill his youngest brother.

Tommy pauses and blinks in consideration at the last option.

He then ends up *laughing*. That's not even an option.

Scratch what he said earlier. He's got *two* plans. Plans A and B. Plan C is just down right hopeful. Plan D is stupid and stands for Dumb and is probably from whatever is left of Theseus that Tommy has left in him.

That part had better *die* because Tommy has no plans being executed. These Technoblade and William character can screw off and find their own canon fodder to blame, execute, then mourn over, thank you very much.

This leaves another issue though. Tommy looks up, looking troubled. He looks up at the top of the shelves, and finds that the sparkling, bejeweled trinkets were all missing. He had thought that it was just his imagination at first, but when he witnessed first-hand a maid *pocketing his golden rattle*, Tommy had caused a riot and wailed.

Puffy had caught that maid and further investigated into the issue. In the end, a lot of maids were discharged from duty due to theft, and without any further punishment.

It did not remove the issue, though.

His wealth is dwindling. These peasant bastards were stealing all his gold!

So here he is, practicing and exercising his muscles so he could walk. He's going to hoard so much shit before it all gets stolen. It's *his*. These people owe it to him! He's literally destined to die! The audacity of them.

Truly, Puffy is the only one he could trust.

Tommy tilts his head up, now looking at her. She notices him, and she smiles at him. "Hello there, Theseus." She coos.

Puffy, who was previously the captain of the royal guard. Truthfully, Tommy had not minded much about Theseus' origins, but Puffy had been a character who caught his eye solely because she was badass.

She was the captain of the royal guard, but she had let go of her title in order to take charge of Theseus' welfare. The novel had mentioned that the reason why Puffy had let go of such an important title was because she had children of her own. She had sympathy for the little Prince who was going to be alone in the Sapphire Palace (once the Ruby Palace, which is basically the royal slaughter house).

So she serves as both Tommy's body guard and as his nanny.

Truthfully, Puffy was the only one that Theseus could trust.

Her loyalty to prince Theseus who she raised had caused a ruckus for the latter parts of the story. The novel had mentioned that she had been beheaded after causing a failed rebellion for the youngest prince's freedom.

Fly high, Puffy—or not. Tommy will be leaving before that happens and he won't be the reason for people's execution.

Tommy was planning on thinking of more plans though. There should be moves he could take, right?

Before he could come to a new plot, Tommy finds himself distracted by a golden ball rolling past his way.

Plan A is a go.

First things first though.

He is *not* going to be called ***Theseus***.

~+~

“Prince Tommy,” the maid sighs. Tommy recognizes her as one of his nannies—Clara, of the house Moonlock. She was of noble blood, as were all of the other servants of the Royal Family. “I don't know if I'm allowed to give you chocolate—”

“But please!” Tommy whines, eyes wide. The crystal illusion placed in his blue orbs had created an effect that made his eyes look bigger and wider, and thus making him *cuter*. He knows his wiles. He's a genius after all. “I was good today. I promise!” He insists.

Clara's stern façade withers away rather easily before her shoulders fall. “Alright.” She says, looking left and right for anyone who might come across their hidden exchange. “But if

anyone asks, you didn't get it from me, okay?" She says, placing a finger in front of her lips in a hushing motion.

Tommy raises a fist in celebration as she pockets out a small bag of confections. "Thank you, Ms. Clara!" he exclaims in a loud whisper voice. "You're my favorite!"

"Even above Puffy?" She asks teasingly as she hands the boy the bag.

He pops one of them in his mouth, and grins. "Now let's not get ahead of ourselves." Tommy says playfully, before running off the opposite direction.

She gasps, running after him. He giggles as he runs ahead, making steep turns in the hallways so he could lose her easily.

"Prince Tommy!" She calls.

Prince Theseus, informally known by the Sapphire Palace's courtiers as Prince Tommy, is now four years old. He's well-known by the court members of the Sapphire Palace. He's gained the respect of these courtiers because of his charms.

Believe it or not, Tommy does have charm.

People find him annoying at first, but his golden heart seeps through the seemingly spoiled façade as the time passes. That's how the palace courtiers end up loving him.

Of course, Tommy had planned that. Theseus was an insignificant and unremarkable thing. Tommy, however, is *all* charisma. He's lovable, and cute. He takes advantage of his baby talk, and short legs. He stumbles sometimes, which is what led many of them to *finally* remove the cursed hallway carpets. Those are dumb, and sometimes he finds that the courtiers of the Sapphire palace don't clean them at all.

"Prince Tommy!" Tommy giggles as he rushes across the halls of the Sapphire Palace. He goes through the hidden passageways that he's long since figured out, straining his ears for any footsteps that could alarm him of a stealthy maid chasing after the youngest prince.

Eventually Tommy finds himself barefoot in the palace a lot of the times.

Tommy is loved, and spoiled, and incredibly smart.

He'd been curious of other languages when he was one and able to gain motor senses in his hands. He'd begun writing when he was one just to see if his hands could handle it.

"Puffy" Tommy wrote on a piece of paper. It was shaky at first, but it is at least a bit legible. He got up from his seat and showed it to Puffy.

Who in turn had stars in her eyes when she saw that he was writing. Tommy was honestly a bit offended. Did she think that all the times they were effectively communicating before were just baby whims?

And so that even led Tommy to starting his education earlier than most children his age. Being an adult in a child's body, he easily advanced through a lot of his own studies. That resulted in higher education at his young age upon her insistence, but Tommy is nothing if not persistent. He's going to show them that he's not supposed to be executed so easily, be it the command of the damned Imperial Prince or not.

He's got three plans after all. If plans A and B have failed him (which is *highly* unlikely for reasons he will later tackle), he will surely do plan C with a breeze (*not*, but the extra education and the praise will probably make it easier.)

And so, four years later, Tommy is now very much familiar with the Sapphire Palace and its surrounding gardens. He's also smart and sneaky enough to be well-acquainted with the secret passageways that not even the adventurous courtiers dare enter.

"Prince!" The maid's voice echoes through the hallways, but Tommy has long since gone.

Stealthily, he rushes to his bedroom. Upon arrival to the place, Tommy takes some bags from under his bed and carries it in his arms.

Inside these very heavy bags were pure gold trinkets and jewelry that could be found all over the palace. Tommy has them stashed in every hidden place in the palace.

Unfortunately, they were about to do a thorough cleaning of the Sapphire Palace, so Tommy had to find someplace else to stash them.

Fortunately, however, Tommy had found a place under the trees in the gardens. He digs them in locations only he could remember. It was very effective, in his opinion. He's a genius, after all.

He leaves through the balcony, climbing down the tree and running to the palace garden where the trees were more abundant and thicker.

Tommy has been doing this for nearly a month now. This means only good things for him, because this means he's stashed a lot of his goods and treasures away through the four years that he's had proper mobility.

The boy stops at a tree, deciding that it will be nice for a new location of treasure digging.

He leans over to begin his dig, but he gets distracted by a sudden flash of light that shone to his eyes. He turns towards it, seeing nothing but brightness in that direction.

Tommy looks down to his decided location, before looking back up at this bright thing.

In the end, his curiosity won over. He brings his heavy bag with him as he goes to explore. It's a bit heavy, but it's nothing that a strong boy like him can handle.

Without a doubt, Tommy believes that this is the best decision he's ever made. This is solely because he has struck *literal* gold.

The thing that shone in his eye earlier? It was the reflection off of golden statues the size of his head. They were small figurines of muscular people seated on marble stools, staring at the sky longingly.

Meanwhile, this golden child was staring at all these *gold* longingly.

Then he's a bit skeptical. Are these things *real* gold?

Well, he can certainly check.

Tommy moves to the statues, specifically to a short one. He leans over, and bites it to see if leaves a mark. He has to check if it's real and if it's not just some cheaply painted marble.

Admittedly, he struggles a little. He can't reach much, which is why he's biting the ankle of this random statue.

He's well focused into his endeavors that he does not realize the looming shadow that approaches him from behind as he's biting this golden figure of a man.

"What is this filthy bug doing in my palace?"

Tommy's eyes widen, and he turns around quickly upon the sudden presence behind him.

In his shock, he dropped his bags of treasure. The gold and the jewels scatter at his feet with a rattle of metals against the ground and against each other. Tommy's body has tensed, as he tries to hide the bite that he's made on the heel what he suspected was tawdry gold (which was in fact, genuine).

He looks up at the unexpected company, and sees a man with rose-tinted hair, tied loosely into a ponytail. The stranger is directly against the sun as he stands tall before Tommy. Not much of his features could be seen other than the—

The *eyes*.

His eyes are like rubies that glitter. Tommy would have said that it was beautiful, that it was astonishing. He would have said that those eyes were clearer than any gemstone that he's ever seen in his lives. He would have said so many things, had he not *recognized* the sheer danger that those eyes held when it looks at Tommy like the young boy is a mere cretin that deserves to be executed for existing.

So, Tommy is frozen while those ruby eyes stare him down.

This goes on for what seems like hours before recognition seemed to finally go through the older man's eyes. "Ah, I recognize you." He says monotonously as a smile is placed across his lips.

The smile is nothing close to comforting. It sends chills down Tommy's spine as he looks up at the man who could very well kill him. It's sinister, going along nicely with his sharp ruby eyes and shadowed expression due to being against the light.

“You are *Theseus*.”

Tommy could acknowledge what he says, but he doesn't know if speaking would get him killed. He could reply, or respond in any way, but he's afraid to confirm the fact that he *is* Theseus—the very same Theseus who this man is destined to just execute for false, unproved allegations of murder.

He doesn't speak, and he thinks that it's a very wise choice on his part because the man before him is the Blood Prince. The Imperial Prince. *Technoblade*.

The boy watches helplessly as Technoblade's eyes *finally* look away from Tommy and settles instead on the floor where the ringing of gems and precious metals had been heard just a moment ago. He sees how Technoblade regards it for a moment, and looks to something behind Tommy.

The man's lips quirk a little. “An ankle-biter.” He says humorously to himself, “Of course. Achilles' would be damned to meet you.” He jokes, but this only confuses an already internally-panicking Tommy who is seriously considering on outright running away at this moment.

Technoblade crouches, eyes returning again to the small four-year-old's eyes as if he was studying the poor child. “You've grown since I last saw you.” He comments.

Tommy considers that maybe Technoblade is considering on slaughtering him right now for being bigger.

There's a confused bit of relief when Technoblade goes up on his feet again, then that relief promptly turns into panic when Technoblade's hands reach out towards him.

The boy does not dare move. Not even flinch.

Only for the man to carry him in two hands, as if he was weightless.

“Odd.” Technoblade hums. “You're rather light.” He comments monotonously as he looks over the kid again. His eyes rest on Tommy's face once more as he asks his question. “Alright, kid, what are you doing in my palace?”

That's where Tommy bluescreens.

His palace?

Oh, he's *fucked up*.

To be fair, Tommy does not really know to what degree he's messed up at. As it is, he is now seated across Technoblade who is looks at Tommy with boredom. Between them is a table full of sweets and milk and small savory snacks, with a teacup arrangement placed neatly

before Tommy and Technoblade each. There is only Tommy and Technoblade with them in the room.

They continue this staring contest for a bit. It's continuous silence. Tommy has no idea what to do other than smile politely at Technoblade.

"I didn't know you couldn't speak." Technoblade comments blandly.

Tommy gulps a little at that.

"This is getting boring."

Tommy is seriously considering speaking—he only did when Technoblade had leaned back to his seat. "Tommy is able to speak!" Tommy says with a smile. *Look polite. Look polite. Surely that isn't too hard—*

And oh fuck, he said *Tommy*, not Theseus. He's messed up.

Technoblade finally looks interested again. Tommy doesn't know if that's a good thing or not. "Oh," is all he says for a long while. "Why's it taken you this long to speak?"

The boy doesn't know what to say, to be honest. "My nanny says that talking to unfamiliar people should be thought hard about." Mentally, Tommy wishes Puffy good luck. He's shifting the blame on her poor soul. Fly high Puffy, you were a great mom and a great scapegoat.

"And who is your 'nanny'?"

He hesitates on answering. Tommy could sorta save Puffy, right? He could say it was a nanny he doesn't know. But then that could mean that the whole maid populace of the Sapphire Palace could get punished (or executed, he's setting the bar low for his bloody brother).

Then he decides that maybe Puffy will survive. She's badass. If anything, she could lead a maid rebellion with all this royal mistreatment going on. "Captain Puffy!" He answers gleefully, being as naïve as he can possibly be.

His brother does not snarl, nor does he look angry or vindictive. Instead, he's *smiling*, as if he found that answer humorous. "Ah, I suppose that makes sense for Puffy to say that." He comments instead.

Nevermind. Puffy will not be flying high.

"Are these confections not to your taste, Theseus?" Technoblade asks. "I'd asked them to serve things that kids normally like." Again, there is that dangerous glint to Technoblade's eyes as he speaks. "I suppose I should have them *replaced*."

Tommy immediately takes a fork, stabs it into anything small and edible, and stuffs it into his mouth. "Mmm!" He says with a cheerful tone. "Tasty!" Tommy continues eating. No royal chefs will be murdered on his watch.

Technoblade (thankfully) looks to be satisfied.

“Captain Puffy.” He says out loud. “She’s told you of her past occupation then I suppose?”

The boy hums and nods as he swings his feet. It was true. He’d asked before why some of the maids had called her Captain despite fully knowing the reason why. He has credibility.

Technoblade nods. “and who is this ‘Tommy’?”

Tommy chokes a bit on the piece of cake he was eating when he was asked that. He drinks milk to clear his throat. He does not dare meet Technoblade eyes while he clears his throat.

Secretly he might be hoping that the piece of cake kills him before his own brother does.

It won’t be Puffy flying high today, rather the odds are against Tommy’s favor and has decided that maybe it’s easier to send a four-year-old child flying instead.

“I’m Tommy!” He answers cheerfully, pretending to be unaware of this stupidly dire situation that he’s in. “It’s my nickname!”

“Were people dissatisfied with your name.” Technoblade then asks, and there is a dangerous glint in his ruby gem eyes as he regards Tommy, “that they’ve settled to call you a commoner’s name instead?”

“N-Nope!” Shit, a stutter slipped. “It’s a nickname for *me*, because The-se-us was hard to pronounce when I started speaking.” He lies instead.

Technoblade raises an eyebrow, interested, and not pissed off (*yet* his mind supplies). “You’re rather eloquent for a boy who finds Theseus hard to pronounce.” He remarks.

“I spoke reeeaaally early!” Tommy exaggerates. “I started formal education when I was three years old.” He can’t help but brag. Surely that could mean that he’d second-guess murdering him if he found out that he’s a smart prince who is *not* useless and wimpy.

Okay, less sure right now because Tommy has somehow caused the room to be even more quiet than it had been before they’d begun speaking. Technoblade seems more present in the room now, which was odd for Tommy. Rather than the aloof air he was giving a while ago, it seemed like the man was now fully there.

Again, Tommy does not know if these things were good things to have considering Technoblade is an enigma even to his own courtiers.

Tommy doesn’t dare break the silence. He doesn’t want to disturb any thoughts of his just in case it’s anything good or anything that considers *not* publicly or privately executing him.

Fortunately (to some extent), the silence is broken by Technoblade.

“Do you know who I am, Theseus?” Technoblade asks slowly.

Tommy really, *really* considers saying no. He considers it for many reasons: he could have deniability and pretend to be dumb—but no he can't do that because he's already *foolishly* bragged that he's a genius. He can pretend to be a dense genius maybe? But that's going to be a disgrace for royalty.

Who is he kidding? He's FOUR YEARS OLD. He can have deniability, right?

"You must be thinking real hard." Technoblade breaks Tommy out of his internal dialogue.

"The Imperial Prince!" he yelps out.

And that's it.

He's dead.

He's gone.

Except Technoblade has no reaction.

Tommy tilts his head, trying to remember. "Technoblade."

Still no reaction.

He has no idea if that's a good thing or not.

So he attempts to find something in his memories that might serve him some purpose for now. There has to be something, right? Any form of endearment that William had used for Technoblade before?

"Brotherblade!" He finally exclaims with the cockiest grin he's ever had sported on his face, cocky with the fact that this should be the right answer. This was what won William over to Technoblade the second time.

It was a mundane ending to the meeting, but Tommy was sent back to the Sapphire palace carried by one of the royal guards. Upon his arrival, Puffy had recognized the poor confused man who had been sent to collect the internally nervous wreck that is Tommy.

"Sam!" Puffy rushes over the guard who had approached the Sapphire palace grounds. "Tommy!?" There is disbelief and relief on Puffy's face when she recognizes the child the man was holding.

Only then did Tommy realize that the maids were a mess everywhere, roaming around as if they were looking for something. Most of them had paused with Puffy's shout of his name, and had turned away from wherever they were searching to watch them.

Puffy takes Tommy from Sam's arms and cradles the boy. She looks up at the man with curiosity. "How-?"

"I've been told by the Imperial Prince that he would like to meet prince Theseus eventually." He announces, serving also as an answer to whatever Puffy had said, and as a revelation to Tommy who is already dizzy with nervousness and anxiety and a barely missed death sentence.

"I'm sorry?"

"Look, Puffy, the kid was alone in the room with the prince talking over tea and biscuits and cake. I had no idea he was even on palace grounds until the Prince called for me."

She holds Tommy tighter.

Tommy appreciates the company the very least. He'd like a hug before he ultimately invites his own death again.

I was in it for the world building, not for the 'Family Dynamic'

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Puffy walks alongside Tommy on the way to the palace. There was no one waiting beside the doors, no ladies in waiting, no guards save for a few by the entrance of the *palace*. The insides were nearly desolate save for a few who would clean the place.

Tommy thinks that it's rather odd, because if these were the royal grounds, then why are there so few people running the household? There are the dukes, running their own things in their own duchies, sure, but how about the palace scribes? Auditors? Secretaries? Heads?

He decides not to leave it to assumption. Tommy tugs on Puffy's hand, prompting her to look down to pay attention to Tommy.

"Puffy," He calls in a small, childish voice. "Why aren't there many people around here?" He asks.

"Well, there are? The maids are—"

He shakes his head. "No!" Tommy again looks at the surroundings, a confused expression still clear on his face. "I mean, where are the *important* people?" he asks, looking over those who he knew were passing maids holding linens, attending to flowers. He doesn't know where the people he was expecting were. "The people who are important to the big guy. The scribes! Auditors! Courtiers for the treasury!"

That was why he dressed up, actually. He'd expected to meet potentially impressionable higher ups that he could get on his side in the occasion that his murderous brother suddenly felt like publicly executing a prince who is very easily framed (not that he will be. He knows what happens. He will not be framed, not if he can help it. He'll have to frame someone else if he has to. Every man for himself down here in hell.)

Puffy looks down at him, before looking around. "Ah, right, you don't know how the Emerald Palace works do you?" She asks. Tommy shakes his head. "Well, not a lot of business goes around here, save for one vital person." She says. "This place used to be brimming with life and people but..." She trails off. "Anyway, the people you're describing all work in the capital now, not in royal grounds."

That's odd. He distinctly remembers that in Prince of Song, there would be so many people around working like bees in this place. Everyone worked tirelessly to do what they had to do with as much haste as they could ever afford.

It clicks, just a little. Prince of Song begins in a time of peril for the Empire, which is probably when the Royal Grounds opened its gates to the people of the Capital. Right now, it's early into the timeline and maybe those dilemmas haven't started happening yet. Well, props for continuity he guesses.

He could help out a lot with the prevention, if ever.

Not that he will. He's changing this story, damn it. If he can change how people address him, he *damn well* can change his future— fuck being involved. He's going to live an easy farm life with so many cows and women and zero deaths.

The two of them come to a stop before a large door. Tommy thinks it's rather pretentious. There's no reason for a door to be this big or this tall. This is dumb.

He squints, seeing the frame glint in the slight shift of light. It's *golden* too. What an obnoxious prick.

Puffy waits in front of the door, not making much of a move in making their presence known to whatever or whoever is beyond this gaudy, gold rimmed door. Tommy waits as well. He doesn't really know what he's doing here.

That guard before that had escorted Tommy back to the Sapphire Palace had said it, sure, but based on whatever nonsense 'first meeting' he and the pompous pig prince had, Tommy had no reason to intrigue Technoblade. He gave simple answers that resulted in mundane and unnecessarily tense responses.

(He blames it on Royal Language Etiquette. That shit is dumb too. Whatever happened to conciseness? Which princely fuck decided that flowery words and poetry is a better medium of discussing war or politics?)

There was not as much as a creak in the large doors as it swings outwards slowly. Tommy was, thankfully, not at all shocked at seeing two people leaving through the doors. It was a man clad mostly in gold. He stands tall and broad, looking just as gaudy as the godawful doors that he came out from. His skin shimmered with a luminescent glitter, something green in some angles and something gold in others— damn, pick a color already.

The man's eyes were of a bright green, like emeralds, glittering almost like Tommy's own but with a more human sheen to it rather than looking like literal gems. His hair was a dark brown, but honestly Tommy only really knew that it was brown because of his eyebrows— otherwise he wouldn't know if he were bald or not. The man had his hair covered in a — *guess the color?* Golden cloth over his head with blue and green stripes at the linings of it.

Did Tommy fail to mention that he was *big*? Like, not just tall lanky asshole big, but huge. Goddamn biceps the size of Tommy's entire head. What the fuck? Is that a man? Is this allowed? He's larger than Technoblade (the prick) and he's pretty sure his genetics having that audacity should have him beheaded.

Aforementioned big man pauses as he is on his way out, with the door already nearly closed behind him.

As Tommy studies his worth based on his stance and his clothing, which honestly says a lot considering the fact that the rings on his fingers easily outweigh Tommy's entire fucking thigh, the man stares back

Thankfully, he is the first to speak.

“OH! Uh, apologies for my insolence, your Royal Highness.” He bows his head respectfully while placing four fingers and one folded thumb down to the flat of his chest, on the side where his heart lies. “Glory forever to the Blood of the Antarctic Empire.” It is the Empire’s bow, one used when a person of lower birth is met with someone with a royalty. He vaguely recalls a different version of that greeting when it isn’t directed to royal blood though. Maybe he needs to recall before he fucks it up sometime in the future. “I hadn’t recognized you. Sorry— Err, forgive me.”

Tommy blinks. “It is no matter, Sir.” He replies, just as he had practiced in his head when he imagined meeting a famous person. “I understand.” He hadn’t taken a moment of hesitance to reply.

“I am very much grateful for your generosity, your Royal Highness.” He says, and lowering his hand and straightening his head again—well, as straight he could get it without having to look like he’s sneering at the young Prince. It’s difficult to be unimposing when he’s the size of the fucking continent. He turns his head slightly towards his company and remains to be silent for a moment. Is he, like, intimidating Puffy or something? It feels like a stare-down.

Quite frankly, Tommy thinks it’s rather awkward. He does not recognize who he is, and he does hope that if he’s important that he’s given a right first impression of himself.

He would have spoken up had another moment passed, but finally a conversation strikes.

Not between himself and this stranger, no, rather between a mother and a son.

“Foolish.”

Tommy snaps his head at Puffy’s words. Pause. What? Did Puffy just outright fucking insult the guy?

“Pops—I-I mean Captai—Lady Puffy!” He stutters.

And damn if Tommy’s view of him didn’t go any warmer than earlier. He’s an awkward little bean despite being maybe as big as fucking atlas. Guy’s biceps could lift the city.

Puffy, to her credit, does not laugh at the greeting. She does sound humored as she acknowledges him though. “Foolish, there’s no need to be formal. You are my ward, after all.” She grins, and that’s the type of grin Tommy recognizes as her being ready to spill embarrassing facts for whatever poor thing she’s targeted. “You act as if I wasn’t the one to soothe you while you cried over a—”

She’s cut off by a groan coming from what was once an intimidating figure, who had his hands likely covering his already veiled face in embarrassment. “Pops please, not in front of his Royal Highness—”

“Oh fine.” Puffy rolls her eyes. “Surely you don’t mind, do you, Prince Tommy?”

Tommy blinks, now in the spotlight. Thanks, Puffy. Appreciate it.

“Oh, I do not mind at all.” He agrees. “But I also do not want you to cause discomfort for... for Sir..?” He tilts his head curiously.

“Oh, apologies I forgot to introduce myself, yes, I am known as Foolish.”

Tommy doesn't comment on how odd of a name it was, because his brother's name is Technoblade (even if everyone knows that's not his real name) so he has no room to judge. Though it's... quite an odd choice of a name.

“I know what you're thinking,” The man says lightheartedly. “Why's his name like that? Well, I quite like it. Makes for an excellent conversation starter.” Foolish grins, and god damn is that a golden canine? Maybe the name does fit the bearer. “Sorry for uh, speaking out of turn.”

“It's alright, Sir.” Tommy grins. “We can keep this hush hush between ourselves, a friend of Lady Puffy is a friend of mine!”

And that's when Tommy knew he got the jackpot.

Leaning a bit forward, a clear show of interest. The humor and lightness in his voice is real, and that's on a man who is easily flustered. Even so, his stature does not waver, showing his reign on power. This is a powerful man, if he's come from the throne room with a lone audience of the Imperial Prince, which makes Tommy wonder how such a powerful man was unable to help his mother in a rebellion.

No matter. There won't be a rebellion where he's concerned.

Another man exits from the door, this time wearing the royal guard uniform. He is a man with green hair and neon eyes all the way to the sclera. It's Sam, Tommy recognizes.

“Your Royal Highness, your Grace, Lady Puffy.” He greets, and Tommy only nods to grant him permission to continue. “The Imperial Prince requests the presence of Lady Puffy... alone.”

Puffy looks a bit confused, but she takes it in stride. “Foolish, kiddo, can you please accompany Prince Tommy for now?”

Foolish nods. “Of course, if his Royal Highness will allow me.”

“I do not mind.”

“And that's settled!” Puffy says in a cheerful tone, now entering after Sam who had opened the door for her. “I'll be back quick.” She winks at Tommy before the door closes.

Well.

Now what?

Silence . That's all. It's just awkward silence between a powerless, charming, child prince, and a powerful, gap moe, veiled... whatever he is. Actually, maybe Tommy can ask that? Break the ice a little.

"Who are you?" Tommy does ask.

To which Foolish had looked back down towards the child in what Tommy could only assume as shock. "I, well, my name is Foolish, your Highness."

"Oh, yes I know your name is Foolish." Tommy nods. "Foolish is a ... cool choice of name, by the way." He can't help but comment. He's shooting his shot in the dark and he doesn't really know what he's doing especially now that he's faced with a man who seemed just as bewildered as Tommy— he's probably lugging a lifetime's expense worth of gold on his pinky alone, but Tommy is just hoping for the best to be honest. Really, what impact will a side character interacting with a side character do anyway? "What I mean to ask is who are you in the kingdom? What are you doing here?" He asks, trying his best to sound innocently curious despite the way he's questioning the man.

The man tilts his head curiously, and the only way Tommy knows that he did do that is because of the shift in the cloth that veils his face.

"Oh, I'm the current Duke of the Northern region of the Empire."

Tommy blinks. Oh, well. Connections are good. This could bode well for him if he's got this guy as a permanent friend. "Oh! Isn't it cold there?" Tommy asks like he doesn't already know for certain that it's the place where summer and spring lasts the longest.

"Nah, on the contrary, it's one of the warmest places in the Empire." Foolish replies. "Our spring season is also the best among the rest of the duchies, second of course to the Empire's capital." Tommy already knew that, but Tommy knows how happy people tend to become when they explain things to a child.

"That's wonderful." Tommy says. "Can you tell me more about it?" Again, the boy already knows, but he is prepared to indulge in pleasant conversation (at least, pleasant for the other party).

Tommy remembers clearly why he kept reading that awfully dragging and inconsistent book, *The Prince of Song*. It was for its mind-boggling politics that makes sense to run if specific issues were non-existent or dealt with using foreign methods bordering on inhumane in his humble opinion. But, it works—in theory that is.

(Tommy isn't known to be very smart, but he does appreciate it when people put some thought into their fiction.)

Tommy knows a lot about the Empire. Not only is it something he was forced to learn due to Puffy's call for his early education, nor is it only because of the cursed book, but it's also something he *needs* to know if he's going to be escaping. He certainly cannot reside in the capital, where the people may know him personally and could bring him easily to the Palace.

Everyone, the whole world, knows that the Empire is the most powerful place in the globe. It takes up roughly a third of the world, all within the South, while the rest of the kingdoms scramble over what's left of the world before the Empire takes that lot as well.

The Empire is split into five large regions, with the largest of it all being the Capitol. This is where the business centers, population density in this region is the highest among the duchies, as well as where the Embassies are located for the other countries who are in a peaceful agreement with the Antarctic.

Other than the capitol that takes up around fifty percent of the Empire's total landmass, the rest of the Empire is split into four Dukedoms, or as the people would rather call it, the Duchies.

There is the Southern Duchy, in charge of the acquisition of riches and trade and the surprisingly abundant mining sectors. Tommy doesn't know yet who the duke or duchess of the Southern Duchy is, but he is at least vaguely aware that the Southern Duchy is not where he would be headed in the event of his escape. Despite being one of the richest and most prominent and having one of the largest land masses in the Empire (only second to the Capitol), it is rather lacking in population save for the hybrids who could actually survive in the area.

Tommy is not a hybrid, as far as he's concerned, so that's the least preferred area of residence. Not only that, but the ruler of that duchy is likely to be a suck-up to the crown. That's the only way they can hoard that much favor anyway.

The Eastern Duchy is known for forestry and agriculture. It is the smallest landmass within the rule of the Empire due to it being mostly an archipelago—a group of islands dispersed in the water. There isn't much it can do with its land other than to plow down its natural formed mountains into terraces that have been implemented ages ago (it is an efficient way of farming, Tommy has to admit). It's a civil place, however, with the most obvious support of the Royal Family due to the importance that these regions have in supplying the South which is lacking the most natural resources. Fishery, forestry, agriculture, life is the most abundant here. This is the primary source of raw materials and food.

It is one of his ideal places to go into for escape had it not been for the Imperial Prince's keen eye on those lands. Tommy has no idea why. Even *he* notices his interest with that Duchy, and he hasn't even met the prince until a few days ago. It's beyond mere necessity. His political influence over that Duchy is so strong that even an infant could sense the favoritism.

The Western is not much of a Duchy in itself and is rather known instead as the militaristic capitol of the Empire. It is the closest to the Palace and nearly attached to the capitol had the

royal family not assigned a ruling duke for the area. It is the second smallest duchy out of all, yet it still thrives despite the dense population of military there are in the place. Probably because out of all the land, it is the most self-sufficient and balanced.

There is no ruling duke there. Tommy had learned from Puffy that the military has no one leader, and instead has multiple factions of soldiers ruled by multiple commanders, generals, and captains who answer to Technoblade himself. The Duchy is split into smaller units ruled by smaller governments.

And really, Tommy had understood that method of politics more. It seems more akin to what he perceives as modern day politics rather than this fantasy-like 'Monarchy'. He doesn't even know how the kingdom is run so well despite being so large. Must be magic.

Last but not the least, there is the Northern Duchy, closest to the equator of the globe and with mixed climates and biomes. He heard there's a desert somewhere there. Somewhere in the middle are very tropical. Many people prefer it there for the warmth and for the seaside view. The ruling Duke is known publicly as the duke Foolish, (and quite frankly Tommy is unsure where all these names are coming from. Are they titles? Aliases? What is the point of all of this?) and is known for a lot of the modernization of architecture all over the Empire.

In the novel, it's also the least troublesome duchy. There were a lot of dilemmas that were used as plot points to prove Wilbur's efficiency in the palace and eventually endears Technoblade to him. Honestly, living in this world, it doesn't make sense. How come The North is the least problematic when it's the most susceptible to influence from outside? The South's surroundings are near-barren, seeing that it's a chunk of ice, the West might have been neighbors with the very aggressive country of Poguehill, the East is a single strong gust of wind away from being blown apart, but the attention of the Imperial Prince ensures that

Basically: The Capitol holds politics; The South holds the riches; The East rules the production; the West rules the military; and the North reigns advancement.

So now, creating connections to a strong political figure, the Duke of the North, is going to prove that this trip is going to be helpful to him in the near future. Tommy doesn't know how yet, but he will be able to use Foolish. That much he is certain of.

Which is why he asks these questions, things he already knows. People love answering a child's questions, especially if they're asking the right ones and if they understand quickly. They adore geniuses. That's how the world is.

And Tommy will be taking great advantage of his title as protege.

Not an hour later, the door opened revealing Sam yet again. By then, Tommy had already established a (hopefully) positive relationship with Foolish (who insisted on being called

Foolish, because the Sir was bothering him for some reason– technically Tommy outranks him, but it's so odd not being wanted to suck up to someone physically older).

Tommy looks up at Sam, curious as to what brings him to the other side of the door that's (protecting) separating himself from his murderous and bloodthirsty older brother.

“Your Highness, the Imperial Prince Technoblade requests your presence.” He greets with the Empire's bow.

He nods his head then turns to Foolish with a smile. He bows his head slightly as Foolish does the weird Empire courtesy thing. “I look forward to seeing you again, Foolish!” He says.

“As I you, your Highness.” He replies giddily despite Tommy insisting to be called Tommy the same way Foolish insisted to be called Foolish. Hypocrite.

Tommy walks ahead, with Sir Sam tailing after him. The older man opens the door for him and presents the prince to the man on a throne, in a courtroom that is as obnoxious and gaudy as the door that hid Tommy from it. It is ridiculously long as well, with Tommy having troubles with traversing over dumb long rugs that lead all the way to the throne.

He has to admit, of course. Tommy knows he looks cool and princely before an imaginary audience consisting of one hundred imaginary people and three actual humans (with one of them being less human for, cough, you know, KILLING HIS OWN BROTHER). Tommy has his shoulders stretched, back straight, head held up evenly, and looking as graceful as a prince should.

What ruins the moment of course is the *stupid, gaudy rug* .

Tommy's foot catches on a fold on the rug, and this causes him to stumble.

The guard behind him is not close enough to catch him, and Puffy is a long way ahead of him, right in front of the throne that is just mocking him at every waking hour of his day.

So, having no one to catch him, Tommy stumbles, then falls, then lands on his front. Luckily, he does not land on his face. He's quick enough to catch himself at least.

And here he is, making an absolute fool of himself.

The whole room is quiet, which isn't much of a feat considering that this ridiculously large space has only three other people occupying it.

Tommy brings himself up before Sam could make a move to help him up.

“Are you alright, your Highness?” He asks, clearly concerned over a prince who had disgraced himself over his trigger-happy brother.

“I am alright! Sorry. I missed the crease on the rug!” He tries his best to say it lightheartedly, despite being at the verge of a full-out breakdown for sabotaging his own image.

Plan C is dumb anyway. Tommy thinks that he should have enough riches stocked for his escape.

Tommy dusts himself, and looks up ahead for the reaction of his brother—

Who does nothing? It's the usual blank look on his face while he sits straight on his throne. Tommy knows that Technoblade is present mentally, though, because his eyes are zeroed in on him and Tommy could see unreadable thoughts behind those red things. It would have frightened him more if Tommy was a wimp.

But he's not Theseus. He's not a wimp. He's a bloody prince and he is going to *own that title*.

Tommy continues walking on his own, until finally arriving beside Puffy.

And it's quiet again.

Fucking hell. Tommy would absolutely love to break this silence if it didn't mean that it would cost him his head. Life over pride, Life over Pride. Life. Over. Pride.

"Theseus."

Tommy almost didn't recognize the name at all.

"Brother!" He greets back cheerfully while doing the Empire's bow. Four fingers, and one folded thumb placed over his chest.

"What made you fall earlier." It wasn't a question, really, and more of a demand. Tommy is irritated at how Technoblade has to ask despite clearly witnessing it. Doesn't he have eyes? What an arrogant pig bastard.

Tommy answers, of course, because he doesn't want his head on a golden pike. "I tripped over a crease on the rug." He answers. For extra childish points, he points at the very vague direction of where he tripped. "Right over there."

He only hums. Tommy feels the urge to shut him up with a quip.

Technoblade crosses his legs and moves into a more relaxed position on his seat. "Have you been well, child?"

He finds that extremely patronizing, being called 'child'. He is one, clearly, but what right does this pompous pig bastard have in calling him 'child'? Tommy could taste the condescending tone all the way where he stands, which is a considerable distance from Technoblade to be fair.

As always, he sucks it up. *Head on a pike. No head on a pike. Control your tongue you sod.*

“Yes, brother!” he answers happily. So, like the *child* he is, he changes the topic. “I had a good meal earlier. Have you eaten yet?”

...

And another thing. Tommy really dislikes how it takes Technoblade a while to answer. It feels like Tommy is being scrutinized at every exchange or at every turn of words. Not only that, but it's wasting his time. If he's going to take this long, then why even ask for this dumb little meeting? Have a little consideration, prick.

“No. I suppose not.” He answers.

Before Tommy could get a word in, Technoblade's eyes lazily shifts to Puffy who is standing beside Tommy. Despite the fear that anyone would usually feel upon the attention of the Blood Prince, Puffy seems... oddly at ease.

Okay, that's not the dynamic he recognizes in Prince of Song.

“I haven't been able to pay attention to my youngest sibling because I have been focusin' on running the Empire.” Technoblade starts. Tommy personally thinks that it's a really badly made excuse for abandoning him. “Yet before me, Theseus has grown into a very healthy child.” Yeah, shut it. No need for hospitality for a kid who lives in a different palace from you and has plans to leave. Not to mention he commented on how light he was— how fucking rude. “You've done well raising him.” Technoblade comments, and Tommy is certain that it's out of necessity rather than sincerity.

“Prince Theseus is a very smart and kind child.” Puffy says with unhindered pride. “I didn't need to do much. He is very capable on his own. An easy child to raise and watch over.” Tommy resists the urge to snort. Yeah, no, he could beg to differ. Tommy might have been capable but by no means did he make it easy for all the lazy fucks he'd had to train in the Sapphire Palace.

Technoblade looks as if he's carefully considering her words. “That credit belongs to you, still.”

Oh, fuck him. Compliment Tommy for once. He has some credit too for holding back on attempting an assassination on this political pig. He's grown up plenty on his own.

“Out of gratitude, you are relieved of your duties as Head Maid of the Sapphire Palace and are awarded with your duty to serve as Captain of the Royal Navy.”

Tommy's heart stops at that for a moment.

Excuse him.

Has he been sold out?

Trying his best to hide his accusatory expression, Tommy looks at Puffy with wide eyes. He's in disbelief. If Technoblade had any tone, he would have believed that he was joking.

And he would have believed it, truly, because Puffy had a humored expression on her face.

"Excuse me, your Imperial Highness, but is that a request or an order?"

"Up to you." He shrugs nonchalantly, which is a jarring sight on Tommy's part. Why is he so casual? "It's *your* job we're talking of here."

Puffy crossed her arms with a grin on her face. Tommy feels nervous, but Technoblade doesn't seem to mind at all for some reason?

She doesn't seem to understand the severity of the issues at the moment. Technoblade will kill her one day, be it because of Theseus' execution or the effect of Wilbur's interference. Puffy having the audacity to confront Technoblade like this is, to be frank, *frightening as fuck*.

"Do I have to make a decision now?"

"You act like you don't know me."

Puffy laughs. "Yeah, yeah. You despise stalling." The woman rolls her eyes. "Alright, you grouch!" She says with a grin. Instead of answering, however, she turns to Tommy with a smile. The woman goes lower, now on one knee, and looks at Tommy at eye-level.

Tommy is just frozen in his position. What does this mean? What is all of this implying?

Maybe this woman is just insane. This could be the reason why she dies in the novel, and not solely because of Theseus. She could be stepping on all the boundaries of Technoblade and got tired, had enough, held a revolution thinking she'd be spared. He is terrified of her audacity, to be honest.

"Tommy, I'm going to leave this decision to you now."

"What?" It was just confusion over everything. He's not quite caught up.

Puffy looks amused, but there's also this look that a parent has when handing their child some sort of responsibility. She looks at him like he's graduated and she's a nostalgic parent. "As you've heard, and I know you're perceptive Tommy, but I've been given an option to return to my duties in the Navy. How do you feel about that?"

Tommy frowns.

They've spoken about this once, about how Puffy was a soldier of the naval forces before, a Captain, even. Directly under the highest command. He had expressed his awe about that, and he'd ask her why'd she drop such a task for Tommy. She said that it was a bit hard to explain, and Tommy let it be. After all, he wouldn't be there in the royal palace for long enough for it to matter. He would be leaving, and whatever job she had would be returned to her after losing the 'nanny' title.

“I’m grown up, Lady Puffy!” Tommy says, lowering his voice so it can only (hopefully) be heard between them. “I’d be okay with either decision you make.” He insists. If anything, it would make escape easier if there were less eyes on him.

She tilts her head, though, looking at Tommy straight in the eyes. The woman nods and turns to the Imperial Prince who seemed disinterested in their little exchange. She stands, and she bows her head, placing four fingers on her chest.

“I accept the duty that Your Imperial Highness has given me.” Puffy says.

Tommy is honestly surprised, despite knowing that she wouldn’t refuse this offer. He doesn’t see much of her undying, motherly loyalty that was described in the novel. If anything, it seemed to him that she was simply handing off the Nanny Title. He’s too shocked by how easy it seemed for her to choose to be able to remember that the Captain Puffy in the novel had been by Theseus’ side for all fourteen years, while she’d only raised this kid for four.

Later on, he would be wondering how much he’s already changed.

“Of course. That’s a fair decision.” Technoblade nods. “Will you be requiring time to transition between your roles?”

“A bit. I miss my children.”

And she has her own kids.

What has he done?

“A new maid should be reassigned to stay by Prince Theseus’ side.” Puffy says with an easy smile. “Do you mind if I pick?”

“Not at all. I don’t suppose it matters to me.” Technoblade says. “However, from now on I will be personally looking after the prince’s well-being.”

What.

The eldest prince’s ruby eyes slowly shifted to stare right through Tommy’s sapphire. Both eyes glitter under the light, a sign of their noble lineage.

Tommy feels a chill run down his spine as the eldest prince’ lips curled into a smile, subtle and mean.

Oh gods, just ignore me . Tommy thinks to himself, staring back at his brother. In his nervousness, he smiles back. *I don’t understand. Why are you paying attention now? That gold statue is nothing!*

“From now on, Prince Theseus, youngest of the Empire’s Royal Family, is to be truly treated as the Prince.”

And he declares that with so much confidence.

You killed me! You killed me! Just leave me be and you nor I get hurt!

Tommy smiles, with his teeth out and eyes glittering (due to his heritage, due to tears, due to faux excitement? Even he does not know.), and he bows with four fingers flat on his chest. “I am very excited to hang around with you, Brotherblade!” He says, planned words spilling through his lips in an easy lie.

Children’s lies are easier to believe. That’s to his advantage.

Technoblade sits up straight, no longer in his relaxed position, and he nods.

Tommy swears that he sees evil intent in those eyes.

Children are easier to kill. That’s to his disadvantage.

Oh, he is mega-fucked.

Chapter End Notes

Gonna clarify some things about this fic that are about how it's related to Who Made Me A Princess :D (just felt the need to clear it out rn if anyone is expecting somethings)

For one, it's going to be based on the Webtoon. If you've read it, then you already know how. However, the things will be diverging from the plot you know in Who Made Me A Princess.

A few examples is the loose 'character roles'

- Puffy serves as both Felix and Lilian, but also with a different unique role in general.
- Sam will be important later on, but he is also loosely based on Felix.
- Clara is a side character who is going to serve as the 'Lilian' when Puffy isn't around.
- Dream is a new character but also VERY loosely based on Alpheus Sr. but with less malicious motives

Another example is my introduction of the world-building

- the Empire politics will be different
- so will the mechanics for magic

(As of now, in my outline, Technoblade and Claude are the most similar characters but his goals and reasoning will be different from Claude in the webtoon :D)

Now that that's established, the way it is now (with how it's written like the events in the Webtoon) is only going to be for temporary.

It will EVENTUALLY diverge because Tommy acts WAY DIFFERENT from Athanasia in the webtoon when she stops her act, but it's the same for now because he isn't 'himself' or 'true' in front of Technoblade.

I really really appreciate the comments by the way ;A; /pos Keep em coming!! I like reading y'all's thoughts on this ^u^

(oh and sorry for the late updates, i have very little free time aha)

Joke's On You, I Know How To Swim

Chapter Summary

“I don't suppose it is possible to control what you don't understand.”

Chapter Notes

Wrote this on my phone so apologies if it is both:
Shorter than you expected
A bit more uneventful than usual

UPDATE: I edited a few lines in, mostly in the climax to end of the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The Imperial Prince looks down at the child who was approaching him, holding that irritatingly disinterested look in his eye . As all members of the Imperial faction do, the youngest prince bows down respectfully before his older brother.

Just because they were related by blood does not mean that they are of equal footing. Tommy knows that- *has* always known that.

“Glory forever to the Blood of the Antarctic Empire.” He greets, bowing his head with his hand placed appropriately on his chest.

He takes great care in enunciating his greeting properly. He could almost hear Clara, trailing behind them, with pride.

It takes a moment longer than usual for the Imperial prince to acknowledge the greeting. Tommy is certain that he's doing this on purpose--when others greet him, he is quick to acknowledge them. Tommy knows he's doing this to spite Tommy.

Technoblade finally nods, before Tommy could finally go at ease.

This is their second time together after their meeting in the throne room. It was at least going better than the previous encounter, with Tommy having to catch up to the man's pace as they walked together (silently) through the gardens.

Curse these short legs, Tommy had repeatedly thought with irritation. *No, my legs are normal*, he'd reason with himself, because his own mind made for a more interactive dialogue than one with Technoblade, *It is the Blood Prince's knees that must be cut down*.

Of course none of his plight had been voiced out. Tommy may have been tired by the quick walking he had to follow Technoblade with, but he was certainly capable of catching up. He's been training, after all. Training for the very likely event that he would have to run for his life on the occasion that Technoblade suddenly decides to off his (currently known) only brother.

Thankfully, none of the hardships of the previous meeting had been present for this encounter--so far, at least. He's willing to give that.

Why, you may ask?

Because in the garden where the two princes met is a very enticing lake, with an equally enticing boat.

Tommy's eyes sparkled at the sight of the floating boat, as small as it is. It is made of wood, as per Tommy's knowledge. Wood, with engraved gold off on its sides, and seats with velvet cushions that Tommy knows is going to be softer than it looks.

It catches Tommy's eyes for multiple reasons--for one, there is a seat. He would rather sit today than have another session of leg work out with his brother. Another thing is that there are a few things that Tommy could potentially nab off the boat without anybody noticing. Small trinkets of gold and gems hanging off as decoration--surely no one will miss it.

But most of all, the biggest reason why Tommy's already sparkling eyes glitters at the sight of a boat on a lake is because he... he wants some semblance of his old life. He used to live by the sea at some point, and there was no shortage of venturing in the oceans.

And while the lake is nothing to the vast waters of adventure, it was the closest thing he could get.

It's been a while, he realizes. He wonders if his brothers are faring well.

Based on their last encounters... Tommy would have to say that they're likely to be doing better now that he's gone.

As if noticing the way Tommy's eyes linger on the boat, the older prince speaks up, "Are you interested in the lake, Theseus?"

Really, Tommy is more shocked that Technoblade had instigated the conversation. Where was all this initiative when he had needed it last week?

"Yes big brother!" Tommy answers. "I like boats, and the lake is pretty." He adds, because he notices how Technoblade prefers it when Tommy speaks more.

That, or it makes him think less of killing him and more of shutting him up.

“...” He is quiet for a moment, as if considering his options. Tommy could never get used to this silence. “Prepare the boat.” He says, and the surrounding servants move around to accommodate to Technoblade’s command. “We can ride it briefly.”

‘*We*’, Tommy notes. He had been hoping that Technoblade would indirectly attempt at Tommy’s life by letting him go alone. Maybe that way Tommy can prove that he’s smarter than he looks, for someone who is supposed to be learning how to count in Kindergarten.

“Yeah!” Tommy cheers. “That is going to be so cool!” False, yet convincing glee.

The boat is already conveniently docked for anyone to ride it--anyone, being the Princes. All that has to be done is get on it-- which serves as a predicament for Tommy because he is considerably short. He looks up to Technoblade, wondering if he should find a way himself or if there is a preferred method.

Only to find the pink haired man looking back down as if *again* considering things. He’s been doing this a lot lately. Considering things. Maybe if he does this more often he can consider *not* killing Tommy when the time comes for a royal execution.

“You’re gonna need to be carried to get on the boat, Theseus.”

Tommy nods. That’s a fair observation. Better than a stool where he could easily overbalance off, or getting on by lifting himself up. The boy looks behind for the chaperoning guard, Sam, to lift him, but he finds that he is not moving from his position in the back.

He looks up again at Technoblade who is looking at him expectantly.

Oh, he realizes with very well hidden despair. *Technoblade will be the one to carry him up*.

Tommy wordlessly raises his arms to the side, for Technoblade to easily carry him by the armpits. Technoblade reaches down, and Tommy stops breathing, preparing himself for anything to happen.

This is it, Tommy thinks. Do or die. Technoblade could drop him and try to drown him, or perhaps strangle him where he stands, and the guard nor the trailing servants behind him will be unable to do anything unless they risk being accused of treason or something. He doesn’t know, politics in this fucked up country is *weird*. Seriously, in what world is judicial killing without due process *acceptable* in this huge-ass country?

Tommy holds his breath as he is lifted off the ground. His bones could break, maybe? The prince could just toss him over and Tommy’s limbs would be crushed. He could still strangle him. Dislocate his shoulders where he is being held from. Probably could attempt to squeeze Tommy’s ribs to break it and puncture it.

None of that happens, and instead he is placed safely on the velvety cushioned seat, and he finally breathes.

Live to die another day, maybe.

Technoblade swiftly moves over the ledge of the boat, and sits comfortably on his own seat right across Tommy's.

Tommy, upon being seated, scooches over to the side when the boat started to move without anyone from behind pushing it. They're a bit far from land, now. "Where are the oars?" Tommy ends up blurting out, because it was silent for too long and he has to distract his brother from any homicidal thoughts.

"There are no need for oars." Technoblade answers. He glances at the side where Tommy is looking, and returns his gaze on the kid once again. "I am surprised you know what oars are. They are of commoner's use nowadays."

Tommy internally freezes. Is it? He only knew oars from his past life. All boats had oars, no matter the size. He doesn't think he'd remember Puffy or anyone else mentioning the economic gap between a Prince and a commoner either. "It makes sense for there to be oars. How can the boat move then?" he asks dumbly.

Yeah, maybe he shouldn't really ask. He knows, somewhat. It's just odd to come face to face with it.

It being Magic. The world of the novel *Prince of Song* has magic in it, though it had taken Tommy a significantly large amount of focus into his read of Prince of Song to notice it. It was just something that didn't seem very important. As far as Tommy recalls, it's different from the regular enchanting table or perhaps even the funky way Endermen or zombies or redstone and potions work at home.

Home, he hasn't thought of that in a while now.

"I recall you mentioning that you started your classes early." Says out of the blue, Tommy out of his thoughts. Yeah, he has more important concerns. He can think about *home* later, for now he has to focus on living long enough to see it.

"Yup!" He affirms. And he's pretty damn certain that the teachers never told him about *not* needing oars. He's also certain that he can't be blamed for being dumb about this topic seeing that details like these aren't usually pointed out in written literature.

"And so where did you get the assumption that oars are needed for a boat-- especially the boats owned by the Palace?"

"...Physics?" he answers.

Because what the hell is he supposed to say? That he has a past life where oars are normal for a boat? He can't exactly say 'hey, where I'm from that is perfectly normal' because in everyone's point of view, he *is* from here. He would be executed for being accused of being insane. Can't have insane royalty, after all. Look at what happened to multiple notable royalties in history-- err, at least in the history *he* knows. He's not sure history is the same here.

“Physics.” Technoblade repeats, sounding incredulous yet still maintaining that dumb monotonous drawl of his.

“Physics is a cool study.”

“Unnecessary for a kingdom of magic, do you not agree?”

“I don't suppose it is possible to control what you don't understand.” Tommy retorts, tired of being ridiculed for both his lack and abundance of knowledge. “Magic has become a necessity, but people don't stop learning how to make wheels because carriages exist.” It was getting tiring being treated like a fool, like a lower-life commoner. Tommy is a fucking prince, and even if before him is someone of higher standing, he doesn't deserve the way he is being scrutinized. Being made to feel like a bug under a magnifying glass. Technoblade is of higher standing, but that doesn't make Tommy *less*. “Which is to say, *Your Imperial Highness*, Physics isn't *unnecessary* just because somehow we found magical ways on how to skip the workload of learning how it works.”

In the back of Tommy's mind, he feels panicked. *Fuck*, Tommy realizes late. He had... he had snapped back at Technoblade. For what? For being ridiculed? Better to suck it up than die, damn it. That's what he's been trying to implement into his life--his new life. Live. He needs to live, otherwise he will die from Technoblade's hand.

But really, what was a living Tommy if not a prideful one? His dignity and his integrity is being questioned and isn't it right to react accordingly? He's a fucking prince. Technoblade may see him lower than himself, but Tommy is a prince and must be treated *better* than the others.

If Tommy dies, at least he doesn't die *weak*.

So yes, while he regrets it, he also knows that he wouldn't have had this conversation any other way.

That doesn't stop Tommy from anticipating Technoblade's reaction. Technoblade is silent, and the boat had paused as well as the conversation.

Well, Tommy killed it.

He had a good attempt. Better luck next time, if there is a next time.

...

Nothing happens other than the boat resuming to move again.

Tommy is nearly convinced that Technoblade is a bit more lax than he is in *The Prince of Song*. Maybe he isn't as powerful or murderous as the story made him out to be. Maybe Tommy has finally duped Technoblade. He'd love to entertain the thought, but dropping his defenses now might as well equate to him dropping his own damn head.

He considers speaking up, but he is unable to due to a sudden jerking of the boat. It moves forward on its own, smoothly floating along the water surface-- *without oars* . It feels like there's a bump somewhere, but Tommy is too distracted to actively notice.

Technoblade and Tommy stare at each other--Technoblade with unreadable, ruby eyes, and Tommy with what he suspects is emotion he himself cannot really explain in simple words. Maybe it's because it's not just one thing. It's mixed emotions after being proven about something, not necessarily being proven wrong nor right. Just. Something.

That. Those were the words.

Even as the boat ride resumes, they do not speak. Tommy feels the heavy atmosphere after having been proven *something* . He doesn't know if this was a good thing or a bad thing,

And it frustrates Tommy without end.

Danger. There is so much danger, but he cannot do anything about it because while he *knows* the feasibility of that danger, he cannot physically see it. He cannot see the manifestations of Technoblade that he knows in the story, but at the same time he *knows* that there has to be something. It's just different. So vastly different. It's like being handed a manual but the manual is outdated and there have been very noticeable changes on the machine.

So whether or not he's in danger,

He doesn't really know. At least, not *yet*.

Technoblade is the first to part the gaze. Tommy doesn't bother to think why, nor celebrate his victory with one small thing.

He simply does the same, and does what he came here for in the first place.

Enjoy the view of the lake.

And... it is effective, at least. It calms him down. It gives him a sense of relief, no matter how little time he has of this sensation.

In his small happiness, Tommy finds an ethereal looking flower. A lotus, not one he's seen before. It floats serenely on the calm lake, and both the lake and the flower reflect the vague color of the sky. Its petals look soft, and welcoming. It was akin to looking at heaven through the mercy of a little flower. A peaceful, inhabitable haven for only the eyes.

It's beautiful, he notes quietly, entranced by it. It is unnatural how something of nature could bring this much euphoric temptation to take.

And he is even more drawn to it as the boat approaches one of the flowers. It's in the way, and Tommy thinks that the slight bumps along the boat ride might have been the same flowers.

He reaches out for it, knowing that it's within his reach. Tommy takes his hand, and stretches as far as he could to reach the flower.

His brother is very blatantly staring at Tommy, yet he does not comment. Not that Tommy cares at the moment.

Tommy doesn't give a fuck if Technoblade is staring at him. He has other, more important concerns.

He holds out for the flower,

If only it was as close it seemed.

In his effort to hold the flower, Tommy topples over the side of the boat, falling into the water of the lake.

Awake. He's awake. Yet that same sensation Tommy feels from his slumber remains the same. Is he really awake, if he feels so weightless? When he's awake, he feels heavier than he should be--in all senses. His mind is foggy, but will awakeness be the one to cure that? His fingers are cold, and the daylight never could fix that. He is weightless, and he supposes that is a mercy.

But he cannot breathe.

Tommy gasps awake, but all he can breathe is water.

He can't die. He won't die. He will not die like this. Not like this, not alone.

So like every day, he fights death. He slams against it with every stroke of his palm against the water and every kick against the pull of gravity. He refuses it, as he keeps the breath that the water deigns to take away from him.

Tommy does not die. Not that day. He resurfaces over the water, taking in the breath that his lungs burn for. He floats above, winning every attempt at his life. If his enemies can't kill him, neither can his friends.

And he loves the ocean, even as it hates him.

He swims to shore, which is thankfully not that far. Tommy claws against the sand as he finally reaches ground, and he coughs out the water that had intruded his lungs.

Tommy looks up to see what little he lives for, and wonders for the briefest of seconds if he shouldn't have fought the embrace of the water.

But Tommy sees beyond that scrap of land and cloth he calls a house, and sees a home in his memories.

No. He will not die.

He cannot.

Theseus clings to reality as he realizes he is down here again . The water has always loved him a bit too dearly. He can't blame it, to be fair. He is a very lovable person.

Just as before, he swims to the surface. Tommy clings to life. He had not been alone then, and he will not be alone now. He isn't anything more than *stubborn* , and death can suck it up.

He will not die.

Tommy fights against the pull that wants to sink him, but he knows it's harder because of his smaller limbs. He doesn't care. Tommy is Tommy, and if he won then, he will win *now* . He slams his closed palms against the water, pulling himself up and dragging the water down. He kicks it away, and propels himself upward.

To the surface.

Where the sky is blue.

To the surface where *he will live* .

Tendrils of his fate cling to his legs, but Tommy knows death, and he knows himself stronger than it. Tommy kicks against it, ignoring how it slithers. He doesn't fucking care what hinders him--he will defeat it, because he cannot die. He will not fucking allow it.

A slam, and a kick, and another, and another. He can see it. His lungs burn, but he can see it.

He breaks through the border between water and air, and takes in the oxygen from above. It inflates his lungs, helping him float with more ease.

Alive.

He's alive.

Tommy looks around, trying to catch his bearings. There is no sandy shore. No tent. The water seems so big compared to him but Tommy knows the water for what it is. He loves it, and it loves him too.

But he will not allow it to have him.

Finally, his eyes rest upon ruby eyes. He stares at his red jewelled orbs defiantly, with rage in his own sapphire eyes. Tommy stares back, but not as the naive Theseus, but as a boy who has seen death far more times than any child should ever have.

Technoblade does not help, nor does he reach out.

Perhaps this man was hoping that death would take him in her favorite form--the water? The seas and the lakes and the great blues have taken more men than any war, so perhaps Technoblade was hoping that it would take him in the form of the serene lake? Tommy cannot judge him for that assumption. He has the form of a child, after all.

Yet forms do not deceive death, just as forms did not deceive Tommy.

Death will not take him.

Because he will not allow it.

Tommy, however, grins. There is an astonished expression on his brother's face as he stares back at the young boy. Tommy finds it hilarious, despite what people should assume is a proper response to having nearly be drowned.

(How should he react, when he's already known death rather intimately? This was much more entertaining.)

And what had tried to kill him crawls shyly on the bottom of the lake, defeated.

"It's a wonderful day for a swim, isn't it, *Brother*?" Tommy chides confidently as he floats on the water.

Who knew that shock would be the only expressive look on his ugly face? Regardless, this brings Tommy Much satisfaction. The prince is not an immovable border. Some things can shake him.

And it's only sweeter when those somethings include Tommy's capability to deny death straight to her face.

~+~

Their session today ends unceremoniously. As Technoblade leaves without a goodbye, Sam frets over Tommy after witnessing the fall from afar. Tommy doesn't really care. Technoblade can leave whenever he pleases--Tommy has had his fair share of his ghastly face anyway.

"I'm perfectly well, Sir Sam!" Tommy says lightheartedly, pushing away any of his fear--not that he has any. He's faced worse things before. "I am as right as rain. As drippy too!" He jokes.

That does not ease the knight's worries however. Tommy doesn't expect it either. He merely has an image he wishes to maintain and he cannot really help that the knight is worried over his well being. (Contrary to his brother)

Sam unclasps his coat and covers Tommy. It's only then when Tommy realizes how cold he actually is.

"I should have warned you, Your Highness." Sam says, grieving over nothing. "The flowers in the lake are there to lure intruders of the palace."

Tommy blinks. That's new information.

"Many have perished in this lake because the servants do not know of its capabilities. Only select guards and members of the royal family are allowed to know of it." Sam adds. "The imperial lotus of the Antarctic lures anyone and kills anyone who is yet to expect death."

Sam proceeds to explain it in the simplest way he can.

The lotus is a creature that lures people the same way an angler fish attracts prey. A light. A hope. A beauty. It catches whatever is off-guard, anything that believe themselves to be safe. And as they forget the possibility of death, it kills them.

Imbued with the magic of the soul, Sam had explained.

And really, this adds up.

Technoblade had been staring as Tommy was lured by the lotus, and Technoblade had been shocked when he resurfaced without harm.

He had been hoping to kill Tommy.

Sam leads Tommy back to his palace, telling him of what should be done to avoid any similar incidents. There are others that have the same magic in its system, but none that Tommy worries about at the moment.

Tommy takes note of them, of course.

But he cannot help but think bitterly how he had proved right to himself what he had proved wrong to Technoblade:

“ I don't suppose it is possible to control what you don't understand .”

It is simple.

Tommy understands the water for what it is.

And jokes on Technoblade, he knows how to swim.

Chapter End Notes

UPDATE AGAIN:

Okay calm down everyone BAHHAHAHA Techno did not /actively/ attempt at Tommy's life. He did just go on the boat on a whim LMAO.

Idk if I expressed this well enough thru the fic (because i dont really beta read and i just send out the update and hope for the best) but Technoblade is just: "Welp, if he dies he dies". and was only 'shocked' when tommy started being all ":D Cool!:

Gaslight the Sick Away

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Theseus was not very famous among the dwellers of the palace, This was one thing that William noticed. Theseus is fourteen years old, and all of those fourteen years were spent being raised in the palace.

Yet Theseus seemed as much of a stranger to the inhabitants of the palace as himself, and William feels heartache for the boy he knows is his little brother. And it aches even more with the knowledge that the young boy doesn't know yet either.

Because word of the Second Prince's return is still unspoken, and not even the Imperial Prince had a clue. William would know. He goes by Will for that reason alone. Theseus looks at Will with glittering sapphire eyes, and William stares back with his own matching pair--except his eyes are hidden beneath a veil.

"Theseus,"

"Yes?"

William doesn't fail to notice how attentive he was. As if he had been waiting for the conversation to start.

"Would you like some sweets?" William asks, endeared by the young prince.

And the young prince had seemed enthralled by the proposition, yet brought down by something that hindered his glee. "I'm afraid I must refuse, Sir William." Theseus says solemnly. "I am on a strict diet." The boy subtly eyes the surrounding courtiers who send side-eyed glances at the young, unloved prince.

William frowns, despite the subtle way that the boy glanced at them. The young boy is thin, why would he have a strict diet, unless it was to raise his weight gain--except the refusal of the chocolate would have been counterintuitive.

"I'm sure that one wouldn't hurt, Your Highness." William says with respect.

He did not fail to notice how only a select few courtiers had done the same. He will change that when he reveals his identity. Theseus will be treated as a prince as soon as William claims his title. His rightful place between the three brothers of the Empire.

Theseus, however, smiles at the thought, as if briefly amusing the idea in his head. "I'm afraid that I will have to stick to my meals, Sir William." Theseus laughs, and they sound like jingles in William's ears.

Love, he thinks. He loves his little brother.

“I understand.” William nods in faux compliance. “I suppose I shall simply keep these--oh dear, it appears that my pockets are rather full.” He blatantly lies.

Tommy catches that lie, and he grins back. “Would you like me to hold it for you?” He says out loud for the courtiers, and they bristle under the gaze of the duke’s ward.

William bitterly lets the anger simmer underneath his skin. He is not known to be of royal blood, known through the palace as a visitor with commoner blood running through his veins, yet he is garnering more respect than the loving yet unloved prince.

But he smiles, because Theseus is playing along. There is a rare happiness in Theseus’ glittering blue eyes, and Will thinks of how much more satisfying it would be to see those when Theseus finds out that they are siblings.

(It wouldn’t dawn until later on that Theseus would appear to him next with a sore throat. One he had to bear alone until Will visited next.)

~+~

While it is true that Tommy can simply say no to death and survive, he cannot really control the functions of his body. He bitterly stares up at the ceiling of his room, feeling chills run down his spine as he tries to overcome his illness. He had caught a cold, and everyone knows that a four year old catching a cold is considered to be deathly.

Babies are very fragile, after all.

The events after the incident at the lake had been a haze to Tommy as he gradually became ill. His old body was resilient to these conditions, but he had forgotten how fragile this baby body is. Suffice to say, he is quite frustrated over it.

It’s been a day and a half since his last encounter with Technoblade, and tomorrow he will have to see his ugly face again. He’s not looking forward to another deadly encounter, thank you very much. Tommy abhors his brother. He cannot wait until he can run away.

In the back of his head, he is seriously considering starting the revolution himself. Out of spite. If he dies, well, it’d be less shameful than a public execution for being wrongly accused of murdering a good guy.

If he gets executed in this life, well, he’s going to give them a *good reason* to try and kill him. Technoblade wants to kill him? Well, he’d better die in a blaze of fire. He’s not leaving without a fight.

He shakes those thoughts out. What the hell is he thinking?

Fuck that. He's not dying. He's going to live, and if he's going to have to be a wimp to do so, then so be it.

Tommy just wasn't expecting how hard it is to suck up to such a tyrant pig. The baby killer. The pig bastard with creepy red eyes and admittedly badass pink hair. Pink is a manly color. Sue him.

That's why he had to scratch off some plans early on. It's impossible. Pandering to such a prick is going to lead to nowhere except tragedy for Tommy, and going down that route means he loses all form of integrity he has left in his stupid little body.

Said stupid body suddenly has chills down his spine, prickling his skin with a cold that he *knows* is fake. It's weak. He's been through worse in his *real* body and now he's keeling over because of some water and fucking wind. Tommy didn't survive nearly drowning only for him to die because he didn't get a towel five minutes sooner!

How did he get rid of this before?

He knows that overrated TLC has done nothing in saving his life—no, he lived out of pure spite (at least that's what he likes to say, he would rather die than admit he lived for anyone other than himself). Love and care surely didn't save him back when he was the biggest man in the universe, throughout history.

"Chocolate." Tommy decides out loud. He knows that chocolate can fix this. As it did for a lot of other things. He's so smart.

The child sits up, and even that was such a strenuous effort that it took him a five second pause to check in with himself if walking to the kitchen unseen is worth it.

It is, he decides, and proceeds to slip out of bed, not forgetting to place a pillow-theseus under the covers and his favorite golden bouncy ball as a head for extra measure. He takes one of the blankets layered on the covers on covers, and he wraps it around himself like an oversized cloak. It's cold. He's cold. He's not cute, he's surviving.

He walks out of his room barefoot—Tommy hasn't needed any footwear within the palace recently because of the sudden attention the pig bastard has been giving him. Not that it was good news. No one really knows if it's good news to have his attention, after all.

Point is that bad publicity is still publicity. Tommy can imply just about anything and there'd be consequences. No one can trust a child to lie, after all, and if word comes out that they had treated Theseus—blood relative of the Blade, Imperial Prince, the Prince of Blood, well, he might just live up to his name right in front of Tommy's eyes.

Or right at Tommy's neck, when he decides to swing his blade to end him himself.

He scowls, clutching his blanket cloak to himself.

He's not going to die.

Even if it kills him—err, no that doesn't sound right. Scratch that.

Point is, he will not be a dying man until death knocks at his door when he's gotten grey hairs and crows feet.

Tommy *finally* reached the kitchen. That took ages. That's so dumb.

He sneaks into it, picking a surprisingly easy lock into the place. It comes easy to him. He was such a skilled man in the past life, picking locks is child's play to him.

Literally, in this situation.

The prince makes sure to shut the door behind him, and he walks to the inconspicuous jar placed around where the tea are stored. Tommy assumed that the reason why they did that was because Clara abhorred tea (which was the only thing he truly dislikes about Clara, really), and Clara was always the victim of Tommy's chocolate schemes. Jokes on them, he *knows*, and he also quite appreciates tea, thank you very much.

He opens the lid of the jar, and spots his treasure. Jackpot.

Tommy reaches out to grab a few, before something at the corner of his eye catches his attention. He blinks, and squints, not quite adjusting his sight to the dark enough to spot unfamiliar objects.

It's something. It's *alive*? What the fuck? Is that a rat?

Tommy quickly shuts his jar, with only three pieces of chocolate in his small hand. He doesn't want a fucking rat going through *his* stash. There's only room for one pest in here, and it's this adorable blonde kid. He looks around for anything to convince it out of the kitchen and spots a convenient broom at the other side of the room.

Before he could reach for a broom or something to chase it off, though, someone grabs his shoulder.

He screams.

~+~

He's ill. A boy is ill, but no one is around to comfort him or to soothe his pains.

Tommy writhes underneath thin blankets, outwardly whining and moaning in his distress. He's not ashamed. He's long accepted that there wouldn't be anyone around to help him anyway.

He shuts his eyes tight, welling the tears away from his eyes because they render his sight useless anyway. Tommy curls in his bed, never really finding a comfortable spot. He's alone. He's never been alone before, but he knows he can survive this.

For them..

He has to show them.

Tommy can't show them anything if he's *dead* . So easily, he decides to live.

Determination, of all things, doesn't make things easier of course. It only enables him to choose the harder route, but it's nothing in the face of the burning desire in his heart to prove them *wrong* . He'll show them, he'll show them that he's not what they say he is, that he won't end up a tragedy.

And he'll do it *alone* .

~+~

Tommy is sat on a counter, blowing off the steam of his hot chocolate while he swings his legs . In front of him is a familiar face that he isn't necessarily glad to see, but he appreciates her company anyway.

It's Puffy, the woman who raised him in his early years, and also the woman who decided to drop him– he doesn't blame her, though, but it is kind of iffy for him to think of how little she cares for him compared to the Theseus in the novel. It's a bit jarring, especially when he's always had it set in his mind that the reason why he wanted to leave is to avoid a tragedy of everyone that was involved with Theseus.

She had come here all the way from the Western Duchy, and when she was a bit peckish, she spotted Theseus inside the kitchen.

"Don't tell anyone I'm here." She said in panic, when Tommy had screamed and Puffy had covered his mouth with gloved hands.

He pulled the hand off of his mouth when he'd calmed down, "Why not?"

"... I'll make you hot chocolate."

Tommy doesn't ask any more questions.

"So, are you feeling better, Tommy?" She asks with affection and concern in her eyes. They had been talking while she made the hot chocolate, and when she asked him why he was dressed so weirdly with a blanket cloak, he spilled that he's sick.

When he noticed her put a couple marshmallows into the cup she poured in, he knew that it was because she wanted to make him feel better despite making the decision to leave.

And don't get him wrong, he could still very well appreciate Puffy's love for him currently. But the difference between his expectation based on the novel and the changed reality he's facing is so vast that he'd likely freak out if his head wasn't addled by *sick*. He could see that she loves him.

He hums a yes, still taking another sip of his hot chocolate. Truth be told, he isn't *immediately* good, but hey, chocolate is good for the soul, he hears. If he managed to convince and gaslight Puffy into giving him this, surely he could gaslight his own body into getting cured.

"It's good." He comments.

Puffy laughs. "I'd hope so," She says. "My youngest, a bit younger than you, adores hot chocolate over literally anything else. It'd be a shame if my practice suddenly falters."

Oh. Right. She has kids. He can't hold it against her for leaving.

So Tommy hums, legs swinging a bit more than earlier.

"So, I heard what happened." Puffy started out, and honestly it's rather painful to Tommy for Puffy to drag it out.

"What happened?" he asks softly, cup still near his lip, head tilted down, and eyes wide in curiosity. He practiced his cuteness in front of a mirror, he knows how to appeal to the ladies—albeit in a *baby* type of way, but still.

Puffy frowns, "I heard you went swimming yesterday. I came as soon as I heard."

Tommy nearly scowls, but he masks his expression into something curious, even excited. He's supposed to be gullible. "Mhm! Big brother took me boating and the lake was pretty so I fell for it." He says.

The woman snorts, but the concern is still clear in her eyes. "I think you took the figurative phrase a bit too literally."

"It was a pretty lake, of course I'd fall for it."

"Don't start falling for the garden."

"Well,"

"Tommy!"

"Who else would fall for it then!"

Puffy lets out a sigh, and it turns into a laugh. "Gosh, Toms," She says, and the way she says it makes his heart swell. Truly, he loves Puffy. He would say that she's a parental figure, but

he's too old for those. She's just... someone he wished he had before.

Tommy continues drinking, watching Puffy's expression change while she reacts to the thoughts running around her head. He could almost read what's going on in her head, but only because of the things she said, and the things that she knew.

"How did you get out?" Puffy asked, "Of the water, I mean. It's a pretty lake, it's said to be really pretty that no one falls out of it."

He blinks. This again. "Dunno! I'm a good swimmer."

"Who taught you how to swim?"

"I'm just a gee nee yus." He enunciates genius with a smug expression, and this causes Puffy to snort. Yeah, they love his antics.

Puffy wasn't convinced though. "You're really smart, Tommy."

"Of course I am!"

"But you're not- you need-" She inhales, trying to think of what to say. Tommy personally thinks she should give up explaining to a kid and talk to him like an adult, but alas, this was what he wanted. If he wants to be spared like a kid, he has to be treated like one. "Do you want your own guard?" She asks,

And honestly Tommy doesn't know where she's going with this. He lets out a hm?

"Do you want someone like Sam to follow you around?"

He's getting a vague image of what she's implying. It's hard when she won't speak to him like an adult. It's hard to understand things when they try to explain it to him like he's a child—which he is, but he's not a normal one by any means.

"Clara follows me around plenty, Sam too, but only when T-, uh, brother, is around." Shit. He almost slipped.

Puffy smiles, and it hides her thoughts more than he'd thought. "I meant to ask if you want your own Sam, someone to protect you at every hour of the day."

Tommy blinks. Oh, "Like a Sam?" He asks dumbly, but he knows what she's asking from him. A personal guard. Puffy wants to assign him a personal guard, someone who would never leave his side, even with Technoblade around.

He doesn't want one.

He wouldn't get the chance to leave with someone stuck to survey him.

"Yes, Tommy, like Sam. Like me!" She smiles.

It's not really hard to see what she's implying.

Puffy is here in the flesh, here to check for Tommy herself. She's come all the way from the Western Duchy to ask something as small as this. That wasn't likely on its own. If she's here herself, then she's here to meet someone else too,

And it would likely be Technoblade.

He puts two and two together and deciphers what she's trying to do—or what she's trying to see.

Puffy is here with the intention to let go of her renewed status as Captain to come back to his side, after the seemingly irrational choice of leaving Tommy on his own. She's seeing if Technoblade is unfit to watch over Tommy himself, and if she would have to reclaim her position at Tommy's side.

And it goes against everything he's trying to do, even if it hurts him. Because he loves Puffy, and as much as he wants her by his side like a.... Like someone he never got to have, he wants to change the story. Change her fate.

She has her own kids too. Dream and Foolish, and one who was younger than him, Drista. She'd told him of their names once before, and he had been confused as to why she'd chosen him over her own children in the original story.

He doesn't want to take anyone's mother. He knows how it feels.

"Nah," Tommy smiles, and it's a genuine one. "I like how I am right now!" is all he says, and that was it. That was the only thing he'll ever say about this. "Now, can you tell me about your cool job, Captain?"

Puffy blinks, probably in whiplash to the change of topics, before she sees the sparkles in his eyes and she obliges in telling him all about it.

Tommy sleeps easier that night.

~+~

"Prince Tommy!"

He shoots up, awake because of the interruption of his sleep.

Tommy rubs his eyes, and looks at a panicked Clara who was at the door with a haphazard look. "Clara?" He asks sleepily. "Is," he yawns, "Is anything the matter?"

"His Imperial Majesty is requesting your appearance." is all she said.

He blinks, and stares at the grandfather clock leaning against one of the walls of his room. It's the ass hours of the morning, and the night before he had slept really late. Overall he'd say he got less than four hours of sleep.

Technoblade can suck a dick. He's sleeping. If he decides to behead Tommy at the break of fucking dawn then he might as well enjoy a little more sleep.

The prince slumps back on his bed.

Clara drags him out and calls for multiple maids to help prepare the prince.

Tommy makes it a point to *show* how tired he is, not that it's an issue. He's awfully small, after all. They could dress him up like a doll but it'd be harder for them.

He sleeps through the process out of spite.

Tommy is staring at Technoblade wearing his dumb look of glee despite feeling anything *but*. His cheeks are still pale, and his hands are clammy, and he is downright *sick*, but he's here and Technoblade is being a right prick that he is. "Greetings, big brother!" He says, and he winces at the fact that his voice was a lot more nasal than he expected.

He tries not to sniff. He could barely breath because his nose is leaking with mucus. His head hurts. His body is cold and not even the thick clothing he's been stuffed into could help the way that his skin prickles with a cold that his body has been tricked into feeling.

This is dumb.

He has thoughts of flat out murder right now and really, that wouldn't be Tommy's fault. No. It'd be Technoblade's fault for being a downright prick.

"How have you been since the last time we met, Theseus?" Technoblade asks, head perched on one hand, elbows on the arms of his throne. He looks downright cocky.

The last time they met, Technoblade had looked at Tommy with the intention to leave him to drown in the middle of a fucking lake. "I've been well!" He outright lies, and he makes it evident that he's lying about it. No shit he *hasn't* been feeling well. Look at the state of him damn it!

Technoblade stares at Tommy with jewelled ruby eyes and Tommy could sense that this man was trying to read through him. Jokes on him, though. Not a thought is beneath Tommy's eyes right now because of the fact that he's *sick* and his mind has been stumbling around from topic to topic in search of anything cohesive he could think about. To no avail.

"Are you ill?"

"Dunno!" Tommy shrugged. "I feel a tad bit cold, but I'm sure that's nothing!"

Technoblade eyes Tommy's fur stuffed clothing and scarf laying over his shoulders. Layers upon layers of clothing, as if it were winter. Tommy had insisted on wearing this, and Clara didn't really disagree. As long as she and the maids get him ready to meet Technoblade, it would have been alright. Appearances aren't as important, anyway.

"Your sense of self-preservation is astonishin' to me." Technoblade comments.

"Thank you!"

"How are you even alive?"

Tommy blinks. "I'm very well taken care of, thanks to you, Brother!" He smiles.

Yeah, fuck no. He's been doing well *on his own*, thank you very much. He just wants to make a point, to make Tommy seem like he thinks Technoblade has him in his best interests when in fact he couldn't be more aware of his disdain for this toddler. Make Technoblade think that Tommy assumes that he is loved.

It'd make it easier, when there's a faux loyalty 'keeping him in line'.

Technoblade is silent. Tommy had prepared for any sort of remark but that.

"So, what are we doing today?" Tommy asked.

He's still quiet. "..." nothing. Nada. Zilch. It takes him a moment to decide on what to do, before he finally speaks. "Tea." Technoblade says, and stands on his feet. He walks ahead of Tommy, and Tommy, like the dog he presents himself to be, follows after the man destined to end his life.

Tommy mindlessly follows, and where there's usually one-sided chatter from himself, there is only silence. He doesn't really notice how different he is, of course, because right now he's occupied with such simple tasks, like placing one foot in front of the other and breathing right through *one nostril* because the other one is blocked. This is dumb. As much as he likes tea, he doesn't want to overwork his body.

He's starting to think that maybe gaslighting his body into getting a better immune system isn't working.

They sit in the middle of a garden, where a table full of delicacies lie. There is a cup of tea on both ends of the table, where the table has already been set for the both of them.

Tommy's mouth nearly waters at the sight of the sweets, but oddly enough, he doesn't feel peckish. He might have lost his appetite. He would like the tea, though. Might help clear his poor sinuses.

He watches Technoblade take a seat, and waits until Technoblade stares at him for a bit before he takes his own seat across the table.

The little prince takes the tea cup, a pink sheen present in the liquid,, and unfortunately it isn't as warm as he wanted. A shame. A cup of hot tea would have been nice for his poor

body. Tommy takes a while, staring at his cup, and he doesn't want to drink it unless it's hot.

"You're not eatin' the deserts." Technoblade remarks, eyes staring right through him.

Tommy scoffs internally (if he did that outwardly, then Technoblade would have likely beheaded him right then and there. He pouts, instead. "Sorry, I don't feel like eating right now."

"Are they not to your taste?" He glances over the confections with a disinterested stare, only for his red eyes to come back to Tommy's blues.

"I love them!" He makes sure to make certain of that, because he doesn't want any chefs beheaded for the sake of royal pride. Gods, this pig bastard is such a prick. "It's just that I'm not feeling like eating." Tommy says again.

"How about the tea?"

"... I was kind of hoping it'd be warmer." He says honestly. Seriously, why would anyone drink tea cold?

...

Actually, no, don't answer that. There are many reasons, and Tommy's pride as a British lad (despite Britain likely not existing in here) is on the line. He just didn't realize how warm it could get in other places.

Technoblade wordlessly waves a hand, and the cup in Tommy's hand grows warm—but not enough that it would burn. Steam starts to rise from the top of the liquid, and a vague scent of a lotus flower penetrates his nose.

Tommy widens his eyes, and grins. "Thanks brother!" He says with genuine gratitude, before sipping it slowly. Already he could feel the warm tea doing its work at his blocked nose. He can breathe, fucking finally. It's worse than drowning.

They sit in silence. Tommy is not in the mood for chatter, and Technoblade has never been one to initiate *nor* participate in conversation.

"You're ill." Technoblade notes, and Tommy could snort into his cup of tea right now if it weren't for the fact that it would have snorted snot along with it.

"Sorry?"

"I asked you if you were sick, earlier. You said you weren't."

Tommy blinks. Did he? No, he didn't. He explicitly remembers saying that he *doesn't know*. "I did?" He asks.

"Somethin' along those lines." Technoblade says, and Tommy feels his irritation rise. Is he trying to gaslight him? What a dick. "You're sick, but you haven't called for a physician."

“Dunno where to ask.”

“You’re a prince. You shouldn’t have to.”

And Tommy feels his irritation rise to indignance. Really? Because he was a prince five years ago when he’d been abandoned to an empty castle with a bunch of strangers. Forgive him for now knowing where his vague power out of a *title* could bring him.

But he says none of that.

“Oh!” He says with a giggle. One of these days his facade is going to crack. “My bad.”

“We’re replacing your tutors.” Technoblade announces, and Tommy can’t save them. What a shame, really.

He changes the topic. “What tea is this? It’s nice.” Tommy asks, somehow getting enough energy to start a conversation. He feels the chills fade because of the warmth of the tea. That’s fortunate, he thinks. At least he can die with a clear mind.

Technoblade hums. “Are you not goin’ to eat your sweets, Theseus?” He asks, still eyeing Tommy. He ignored Tommy’s question.

Tommy looks down, and finds that yeah, he does want to eat. But he doesn’t want to prove himself wrong from earlier.

And also, he ignored his fucking question.

“No, I’m not really feeling it to be honest.” He says, taking another sip of the good tea. Good work, tea. He’s feeling better. Maybe a good replacement for chocolate.

Maybe .

Red eyes stare at him, as if he were considering something, but Tommy doesn’t mind. Technoblade did that a lot, through the three? Encounters that they’ve had. “What’s in the tea?” Tommy asks, just so he could ask the maids later about it.

“Hmm, maybe you can guess. In exchange I’ll get the maids to prepare this same meal for later when you’re feelin’ up to eatin’.” Technoblade drawls.

Oh. A challenge.

“Is there a hint?”

The prince is quiet.

“Is it floral?”

“Yes.”

Tommy looks around the garden. It's a lot of flowers, a lot of them that could be processed into tea. From the distance there was the lake that he nearly drowned in, and he still sees that dumb oar-less boat. Besides from that, there is nothing else on the surface of the water. Not there, then. He looks away, and towards the bushes.

"Rose?"

"Nope."

He looks again, and sees an area dedicated to solely hibiscus flowers. "Hibiscus?"

"Not really."

"Have you got a hint?" Tommy asks, and he fails to notice how his body isn't as heavy as he thought. "It's hard to smell it on its own." and even if he was capable of smelling it, it's not like he's memorized the scent of every damn flower there was.

"Are you ill?"

Tommy raised an eyebrow. He's asked that like, three times already? Why is he so insistent? "You told me I was."

"I asked in present tense."

He was about to say yes, he is ill, thanks for that inkling of concern, but no, he couldn't. There is an evident lack of pains in his body, and the chills have fully gone. Maybe the last things that remain from his illness is just the remaining thick mucus that line his tracts, but even that was in the process of being washed away.

"I... don't think I am?"

Technoblade hummed. "Alright." He said, and he's standing from his seat. "Because you cannot guess the flower,"

Oh fuck, was this a death thingy? Was he about to die? While it's true that Tommy knew that he's been overstepping a few boundaries and changed a fat chunk of the actual events of the original story, he also didn't expect it to change that Technoblade would kill him this soon.

He's not having it.

Tommy was prepared to run. He slips off his chair, and stands on the ground with stable legs. He's prepared to run, yes, but he's also frozen somehow. Why? Well he's got no idea either.

But he's grateful that he didn't run, because if he did that would have been incredibly suspicious for nothing. Technoblade merely walked past Tommy without much of an issue. "I'll have the answer sent along with some things." is all Technoblade says before they both head back to the castle in silence.

Tommy blinks. Relieved.

~+~

Tommy is no stranger to illness. He knows it like the back of his hand. Imagine a pampered life followed by one full of various peril. His body is basically meat for the bacteria and viruses to feast on. Not that he'd let them, of course. He's too stubborn for that.

The boy remembers illness. It's not quite like death, no. It is no friend of his, even when it used to.

Tommy used to love being sick. Being sick meant that he would be pampered and cared for. It's like a break from his own body, and everyone else would be present to take care of it while he's incapable or mentally in vacation.

But then came the time when he was alone, and the memories of loving sickness was replaced by searing hatred and disdain over it.

He knows illness. It always goes worse before it gets better.

Even more so when he's alone.

Tommy sleeps, knowing that if he dies, he'd be too weak to realize it anyway.

He wakes up the next day anyway, because death is his friend and it seems like she dislikes sickness too. Turns out, that wouldn't be how he dies.

Good.

~+~

He has no idea how this happened. When he left for the Emerald Palace, he had been sick to the point of contemplating ending his life by coughing straight at the prick who made him go there in the first place. He was seriously considering it.

But now he's in the arms of Clara, and there is no heavy bone in his body, nor is there a chill. In fact, he feels really stuffy because of all the layers of clothing that he had appreciated just earlier on.

When he comes back to bed, he feels better than he did when he left it earlier morning at the ass crack of dawn.

He has a good night's sleep.

But like the day before, he wakes up with a ruckus. Clara is knocking incessantly at his door, and Tommy sits awake, eyes bleary from sleep. "Come in!" He calls, and Clara nearly stumbles when she opens the door.

"Your Majesty," She says, looking breathless.

"I believe that you are, uh, requested outside."

It doesn't take nearly as long to prepare him today as they had yesterday, so it was safe to assume that the reason Tommy's presence was being requested isn't because of technoblade. Rather, it must have been for someone lesser, because he's actually wearing something he deems comfortable.

Clara carries him to the front doors of the palace, and the guards with unfamiliar faces open the doors for him. She lets him down.

He nearly hoped she hadn't because his knees feel weak.

"What-" He gasps, witnessing a league of new maids and guards bow in front of him.

"*Glory to the Sun of the Empire*," They all greet, and Tommy has to admit that maybe the chills that ran through his spine wasn't because he had only just recovered from his illness a few hours ago. It was frightening, to have his identity be confirmed by so many people.

And it is infuriating, because damn it he has to gaslight so many people. Technoblade, that asshole.

In front of the crowd of people, one familiar person with green hair steps forward with a smile on his face. "Hello, Prince Theseus." Sam greets, and he approaches Tommy.

"Hello, Sir Sam." Tommy greets back.

"Your brother has requested to have this sent to you." Sam shows a flower to Tommy, and it takes Tommy to realize that it was in relationship to the little question game Technoblade did yesterday. The tea.

He looks at it, and while it does seem familiar, he can't quite place where—

Oh.

That fucking prick.

Sam was holding a lotus flower, looking a little less ethereal than when he first saw it. Maybe it was because he was aware now that it's nothing ethereal and more infernal, or maybe it was

because it was literally plucked out of the lake where it lives and snipped from whatever stem it came from.

“Oh,” Tommy blinked. “Thank you.” He takes the flower, and the call of death was not as present as it used to be. Still fucking eerie, though.

Especially when he was made to drink *tea* made out of the essence of *this fucking monster plant* .

Oh, but that’s not the sole kicker, no.

Sam kneels in front of Tommy (and honestly, if Tommy wasn’t panicking with so many people witnessing this, he would have been peeved by the fact that even when kneeling he is taller than Tommy.

But no, all he could think of in this moment is *fuck* . Because Tommy’s plans have taken a liking to the windowsill somehow and someone had just pushed it off the edge. “I, Sam, am at your service.” He looks up from the ground he was looking at and smiles at the prince with such a dad look. He hates it. “I will be your temporary Royal Guard starting today, Prince Theseus.”

Fuck.

“I’ll have the answer sent along with some things.”

His doom, is what that pig bastard meant. His plans have been, what’s the word? The word for being thrown out the window— Oh, right. Defenestrated.

Chapter End Notes

i adore your comments omfg aldkfjsaldfja

And like I absolutely appreciate all the hype yall have been giving this fic (but im sorry if it seems like i don't, ive been getting a wee bit anxious of replying recently so i hope it's okay ;;) I genuinely love reading what you guys think of the fic :D

SPOILERS UNDER HAALSDFKJSLJFA I ADORE YOUR COMMENTS

(Edit: So I want you guys to notice that when Tommy was looking for the flower that Technoblade used, Tommy notes how there are no more flowers on the surface of the lake because hihi i like it is all HAHAAH)

(Edit 2: "Technoblade is starting to care!!!" ; Me, knowing what the lotus and what the deserts have in them: *Nervous Sweating*.

I guess all I have to say is, uh, Technoblade asking Tommy if he wants to eat is actually the more caring part of what's going on, not the tea. Spoilers ig? I just wanna say that I'll prolly never write in Techno's POV, but Tommy will find out about it on his own eventually)

Courtiers' Interlude

Chapter Notes

Here is a really impulsive short update that I wrote in like
An hour

Ah the things I do to procrastinate.

The palace courtiers have little to say of the prince that burdens them . Small and frail and not a single smart bone in his naive body. They despise him, those who are burdened by his presence.

They take from him, time and time again, because he disturbs them. How is he related to the empire's royalty? This is a disgrace. A shame. He was likely just a child with eyes that deceive, because they will never treat him the way they treat the Imperial Prince, Technoblade.

Why should they treat him with respect when not even his own brother treats him like a prince?

In fact, they might gain favor with what they're doing. Surely the first prince also despise this little prince. The little prince Theseus, so shameful in nature. They abhor him.

He might not even be of blood relation. The Courtiers have never heard of the Prince being born, anyway. Surely this child was here under false pretenses that he was the son of the Emperor, one who has also left him to rot in this Sapphire Palace.

No, the *Ruby* palace. They do not acknowledge the new name, changed so subtly and borderline-unofficially. This is the Ruby Palace through and through, where every corner of the palace has the aura of death and gloom and everything wrong with the world.

While it is true that they fear Technoblade,

There is nothing to fear with Theseus, so insignificant and so bland. He tries to act smart but they see him and his failures and his tears and his *weakness* . To be assigned to him is social exile, at this point.

And they abhor him.

Oh do they abhor this child, who has ruined their lives, not even knowing why or how. They abhor how he looks at the with this pathetic face of begging, one unfit for a prince. He is no prince of theirs. He is a disgrace. A stain on the family.

Maybe this is why no one outside the palace knows of his name. They are too ashamed to speak of this shameful job of theirs.

If they skip his meals, he is too measly to complain. There is no one to complain to, because any higher power deigns to ignore him. It is a hassle to bother actual royalty with something so hated.

Maybe he is the reason why Technoblade is in power, that Philza, their Emperor, had hated this child so much that he had to leave for so long. That their Empress had rather died than raise this disgusting child.

If they barely touch his unkempt room, then that is not their problem. Who is he to complain to, when anyone with an ounce of power had been the one to impose this exile? If they ignore how he barely leave his room with the reason of illness, then who is he to whine? Why is he so weak, that a simple flu would take him down like this? Who is he to speak, when not a single voice had squeaked out of that unworthy mouth of his.

Sometimes they all wish that he had died, instead of the Empress.

But Puffy, that pompous, demoted captain, Puffy. The maid. The nanny. She loves the poor thing. They hate her too, but they don't dare express it. Her children are powerful after all. It's such a shame that she decided to prioritize this weakling over her own children.

Adopted or not, a peasant cared for would have more power than the blood-related, weakling prince Theseus.

The courtiers abhor that prince. *He is no prince of theirs.*

~+~

The palace courtiers have a lot to say about the prince they serve –the younger one, with youth in his stature but age in his gaze. There hasn't been a single complaint, no, but there have been rumors upon rumors about the young prince.

It had been a week ago when they had barely heard of the child. Not even a name. His name, Theseus, had been but a whisper in the wind of the Emerald palace. Why would they worry about a prince without a face when they fear for their lives in the face of this older and more dangerous one?

But then the order came up, shortly after the blue lotuses from the largest lake in the palace had been ordered for permanent removal, where three fourths of the Emerald palace's people are to be moved to the Sapphire palace. People were scared, at first, many daring to instead quit their jobs. No one was punished, but to quit from the palace is forever going to be on

their ledger. A disgrace of not only the Imperial Prince, but to the empire. Shame on their honor for the rest of their lives.

The ones who stayed understand the sentiment of those who chose to leave. They were being migrated to the once-Ruby palace, after all. Who knows why, no one understands the Emperor.

Then the courtiers meet him.

Prince Theseus.

They do not adore him at first. In fact, they were...perturbed. Unsettled. The first time the courtiers saw him, the child was so small, standing on two feet beside a maid who stands obediently behind him. They bow, with the usual greeting of the empire. It's customary. The ignorance of such a thing would be a crime punishable by death.

And they hadn't noticed at first, but the Warden had been among them.

No one will speak of it, but that day when the Warden walks up to the prince, they all held their breath. Afraid to blow one wrong wind at the prince and have their necks be split at the center with a sword and the Wrath of the Warden. They know him. He, who the Imperial Prince kept by his side.

There are rumors of this Warden turned royal guard of the Imperial Prince, now royal guard of the third prince. People talk, after all, just never in front of their superiors. The Warden had been a prisoner of another kingdom. A prisoner who holds others in chains, without an ounce of loyalty in his bones and only duty in his veins.

People say that even Technoblade could not kill him, so instead he trained him. They say that the reason the Warden is stuck to the Imperial Prince's side is not for the sake of the prince, but for the sake of everyone in the kingdom.

So to see him, the frightening man with green hair, scales riddling his forearms and thicker and tougher than even the strongest netherite, eyes glowing a poisonous green, *kneeling* before prince Theseus? A mere four or five year old child?

If the Imperial Prince Technoblade had been terrifying,

What of this child?

They do not know how to act before this prince so they instead act as they usually do with the first one. Ignorance, keep eyes low, lower than the Prince's stature, survive by doing your job.

The courtiers know how to act. They prepare every inch, every nook and cranny of the palace for any form of inspection. They notice how there is no rug in the Sapphire palace. They rush to replace it, afraid that this oversight would cause them their heads.

He is one of power, they realize, when a man with a veiled face had come for a mere visit to the Sapphire palace. Prince Theseus had been jumping from lecture to lecture that day, juggling every lesson from professors they only dream of ever learning from. If that hadn't inspired awe and fear from the courtiers, imagine their shock when a maid comes running across the halls, announcing to every maid, butler, servant, that *Dream from the Northern Duchy* had arrived.

They stumbled to prepare. There had been no preparation, nor any prior announcement.

Clara, the head maid, nanny of Prince Theseus, had been the one to escort Theseus from his classes to greet the visitor.

"Prince Tommy." Sir Dream had said, and any maid within hearing distance could just hear the affection in his voice. "Greetings, Your Royal Highness." He says with a bow, and *Prince Tommy*, had just *giggled*. Formalities thrown out the window.

"Dream!" He said, launching himself to the arms of the veiled man.

Anyone with reason had bowed their heads, afraid to see what was under that mask.

"What did I say about nicknames!" The child *demanded*. If there was freedom of expression, they all would have been gawking at the mere tone the child had when speaking to the older brother of the Northern Duke.

But the man *laughs*, "I understand, Tommy, but you can't expect me of lower status to just drop formalities."

"You said it yourself, you're lower than me so you gotta adhere to what I say!"

"Alright, your highness." Had that been a *teasing tone*? "I will make sure to keep that in mind, your Princely... childness." That... that was awkward, many would admit.

Many would also find it... somewhat endearing though.

They spend the day being the lining to the walls, back stuck against the walls in preparation of anything the two people of *Imperial Status* would need—which was nothing. They had only greeted each other, spoken casually, and Dream had set off to leave the palace grounds.

Dream hadn't even greeted Prince Technoblade.

What?

Fear. It's fear, they decide next. Fear the youngest prince, because he has everyone of high power wrapped around his little pinky finger.

The courtiers feared for their lives, when people witnessed Prince Theseus— no, Prince *Tommy*, trip and fall. Right before the Warden who had been trailing behind the prince as per his job.

They heard a yelp, first. “Ack!” And it was innocent. A little child trips all the time.

And they witnessed the Warden pick him up, concern and emotion flashing through his eyes brighter than any other occasion. “Are you alright, Tommy?”

Tommy. The kid has made the Warden drop the honorifics as well. The kid’s influence is... concerning, to say the least.

“I’m alright, Sam!” He laughed, but when he paused, he glared at the rug that the courtiers had so painstakingly chosen for the prince. The child groans, and children do that all the time, but this one was frightening not because Tommy doesn’t act like a typical child, but because of how unaware a single utter from himself can be. “I hate rugs. I thought I asked the maids to get rid of it ages ago?” He pouted.

And anyone there to witness it had told everyone who had listened to never cross the youngest prince. Not because the prince was a threat. Not because the child is dangerous the same way as Technoblade had been. Not because he holds a silver tongue, nor because he wields a blade with fatal strokes.

No, because *he hadn’t a need for any of that* .

What Tommy had was something stronger, they said. Loyalty. People.

And the child, they say, had been *blissfully, dangerously unaware* of the power he holds over their heads.

The story the maids had told everyone else was that after his light comment, that pout, the *slightest* disappointment in his eyes, the Warden smiled, and carried the boy. “I understand, Tommy.” He says, pulling Tommy’s head to the crook of his neck so the princeling wouldn’t witness the...

The *striking danger of a promise* gleam in his neon green eyes, staring down every courtier who had witnessed the event. “We will make sure to get rid of the rags.”

Everyone who had been there had promised that the Warden stared down every single person present, as if remembering their faces, savoring the fear of everyone who had wronged Prince Tommy.

But there was a few who had warned everyone against that fear. That what others say is a lie, an incomplete true, omitting the most important part in that event.

Their prince, the prince who Sam had been willing to punish for, had pulled from the hold that Sam had, and stared him down. “That’s a shame, we can prolly make the pretty rugs into...curtains!” The prince had blinked, and if anyone hadn’t been so addled with fear, they would have called it adorable how he did that. Confused, even by his own thoughts. “Or clothes! Curtain rugs might be too heavy. Did you know that the last rugs were pretty, so I gave them away for the maids to make clothes and sell?”

The courtiers, and apparently the Warden himself, hadn't known that. "No, I actually didn't." And just like that, all threat had been washed away with a flutter of lashes and the ridiculous decision to make clothes out of rugs. "Does your brother know you did that?"

"Nope!"

He *smiled* . The Warden *smiled* with fondness!

Soon, the complete story took over the courtiers, and their perception on the little Prince is awe, and adoration. Gone is the fear and disturbance. Gone is the hesitation in being assigned to the Sapphire palace.

And maybe it wasn't so bad that they got assigned to the Sapphire Palace. Tales of the Ruby Palace had been drowned out by Sapphire, and love, and the adoration for a little Prince named Theseus, called Tommy, and loved by everyone.

Don't look at a gift horse in the mouth—well, unless it's just a head on the bed.

Chapter Notes

Unbeta'ed, will prolly edit later, am sleepy and am recovering from an illness
sldfkjsdlfjzzzz

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy is completely and utterly fucked . While that is a crass and maybe tasteless way to start this, it's also the simplest and most informative way one could express his grievances.

For one, he isn't stupid. While it's true that currently life hasn't been as, you know, *perilous* as it usually is, with the entire 'destined to doom' thing Tommy has been handling, there's only so much good that can happen for a while. That's how the palace is. Tommy, in his four, almost five years of living in it, is aware that something is off.

It hasn't even been a day when he's been introduced to the new Palace Courtiers and his Personal Royal Guard, when Tommy realized that not only did Technoblade send over an entire platoon of palace servants, he had also done the courtesy of *thinning out the population* .

He replaced his old maids!

Fortunately, all except Clara, but still! His hard work. He trained them *not* to steal his gold and now he can't even trust these people to know anything about how he had trained the old servants to run this palace! Tommy doesn't even have his old tools anymore. He's older, so they can't just pass anything wrong with Tommy as 'simple childish whims' anymore, not like when he was three and was testing out the languages and idioms that run this place.

But really, that was not what takes the cake. No. What takes the cake is that he had been given *Sam* .

Tommy had initially thought that this was something good. A peace offering. Something to tell Tommy that no, Technoblade is no longer trying to kill him, and yes, he is seen as actual royalty.

No, no, no. Tommy sees through this. He can see through the awed expressions of everyone around him while they see him and Sam interact and hold hands like this adorable pair of an old sibling figure and a childish baby.

Sam was a *fucking ticking time bomb* .

Day one into being guarded by Sam, and already he's got this dog by his heels every damn time. He's never alone. Not one second outside of his own bedroom. Tommy had not really thought anything wrong with Sam, at that point in time. He had been the one to bring Tommy home last time, when he had nearly drowned in a lake, and had wrapped him in his own cloak too.

And the thing is, there's no malicious intent. None! Every time Tommy turns around, he'd almost see Sam with a wagging tail and puppy ears. What is this. What is this challenge that Technoblade set him up for?

So that's the first day. Nothing wrong. Nothing off. Just that there is now this wall that's shielding himself from his demise. He must have found himself a substitute for Captain Puffy from the novel, so Tommy makes sure to still keep a sharp eye on the events to see if there were too much things that coincide with the original plot.

Nothing, of course, on the first day that is.

Day two, much like day one, was uneventful too, but Tommy found himself very much conflicted. Sam is a delight, truly. Tommy's attention deprived subconscious preens under his attention (not that he would admit it. He would *never* admit such a shameful thing.)

He can't be alone, and he still needs to store his treasure, and he needs to do it *soon* because he doesn't know what the new cleaning schedule is. So here he is, walking to his study where he's to meet a professor to continue their lecture on politics. Normally Tommy would have this time free, because he's given some leeway between lessons and when he has to move from the study to the ballroom or to the music room.

Tommy's been looking forward to it. He's been carrying his gold on him so he could finally transport them to his hiding locations.

So he moves to his Imperial Politics lecture with a skip in his steps and glee in his stride.

"Greetings and blessings upon the Prince of the Antarctic Empire." The professor, newly appointed a few weeks back, greets Tommy. Tommy bows his head gracefully, but not so much as to overly stroke the man's ego.

"Hi prof Henry!" Tommy says with a smile. "What are we discussing this time?" The child walks towards his seat.

The man, Henry Arrington, blinks, still unused to Tommy's casual air. "Prince Theseus—"

"Tommy" He corrects.

"Your Royal Etiquettes teacher would greatly frown upon your casualness when presenting yourself to someone lower." the teacher warned, "Forgive my impudence but I think it would

be suited for you to present yourself as the prince, not as,” he doesn’t seem to have the words, but Tommy knows what he’s implying.

The boy frowns, seating himself down. “Look, prof,” Tommy thrives in the uncomfortable air Arrington presented. “I know that I’m a prince. You know I’m a prince,” he exaggerates his movements when he points to himself, then gestures at the professor in front of him. “Is there really any need for unnecessary antics when we both know what position we both lie in in this hierarchical spectrum?”

Arrington seems taken aback, but he regains his composure and grins. “Ah, of course you know how to use the words ‘hierarchical spectrum’ in a sentence.” He muses, before shaking his head. “I wouldn’t say that it’s needless, Prince Theseus.”

“Why not? You know I’m higher, and I know that you aren’t to disrespect me.”

“Then that means, Prince Theseus,” Arrington adds, “That by the removal of formalities you’re also depriving the person you’re speaking with the *clear* definition, the line, between casualness and disrespect.”

“And I’ll define it myself.” Tommy argues. “These *needless* rules are for posies who don’t aim to let themselves known, prof!”

“Then that would make the line between commoner and royalty vague—”

“And what’s wrong with that?”

Henry Arrington blinks for a moment, before laughing. “Right, of course,” He shakes his head. “I’ll probably add that to your course outline in the near future—in the time being, however, I think we have to discuss the mode of production in the Eastern Duchy.”

Class begins without another hitch, and Tommy is blissfully aware of all of it. He answers each question and prompts smoothly, seeming bright in the eyes of his favorite professor, Henry Arrington.

He takes notes happily, imagining being alone outside of the castle and being free and not having to pretend being this child prince. He wants his sparkle back. He wants his sass. He wants to slouch and be a kid, and lie in the grass and return to the maids who fret over him wondering how he got so dirty. They never know how Tommy escapes the Palace, all of them strangers to the hidden passages of the Ruby—no, the Sapphire palace.

Class ends without a hitch, ending smoother than when it began. When he’s dismissed, the prince takes a peek outside of the room, finding no one waiting by the door. There’s leeway between his schedule, so he can take a quick run outside and make his shoes muddy.

Tommy sneaks to the nearest passageway, running in a way that didn’t cause the gold in his pockets to clink in its abundance. He sneaks to the crevice behind the wall and steps on a

platform with a weight that triggers the slow and subtle movement of a door. Tommy climbs through the new hole, and lands to the other side with a wider passageway.

It's dark in here, with only so little light coming from the well-lit halls of the palace. It's enough though, because Tommy knows to navigate, and children's eyes adjust well to the dark.

He slides past another crevice in the wall, leading to an unnoticeable part behind the palace that exits to the garden he frequents at. It's hidden by a pillar large enough to block people's sight of a hole in the wall hidden with the help of stray vines and overgrown garden bushes.

Tommy enjoys the sight of the garden before his eyes, already zeroing in on the location of where he spreads and hides his goods. He's got his gold, all he has to do is hide them.

The prince steps out of the bush, and sprints towards the trees that line around a plain full of evenly cut grass. Tommy could feel the splash of dew by his ankles when his leather shoes stomp over the grass. He has no mercy for the gardeners here for the grass they have to keep alive. The sapphire palace, after all, is safe from the cruel watch of the Imperial Prince Technoblade. They can take as long as they need to replace the grass, and it's not like they have a lack for money to pay for more grass to plant.

Tommy huffs, leaning against the tree. The burning of his lungs made him happy, contrary to the tireless way he had to sit on chairs and wait as everything was handed to him.

Royalty is such a pain to be.

He sets off to bury his treasures for him to collect another day—the day he leaves this End forsaken palace.

Tommy can work with change. He's been working with it for nearly five years of *this* life constantly, he could learn to work with it for a couple years more.

~+~

Tommy remembers him from the story now. He was foolish. Utterly foolish to believe that Sam would be *good*, albeit a bit clingy. A ticking time bomb is what he is. Someone dangerous. A side character that William in the story had only taken note of twice throughout, but both times had been of *fear*.

He was foolish in forgetting such a major small detail. The tail. The creeper. The *Warden*. That's who Sam is.

The extent of his grief? Well he's already expressed some of it, but to reiterate:

Sam was a *fucking ticking time bomb*.

The revelation was jarring.

It was on a walk, one where Sam had to accompany Tommy with. It was the third day, one where Tommy had the most free time in a week among all the other days. Tommy hadn't really expected much of it, other than simple dilly-dallying. The servants have nothing to expect from it either, seeing that he's a kid without much relations outside of the palace.

Dream visited, though.

Don't misunderstand. Tommy adores Dream. He likes him more than anyone, knowing how little he mattered in the original plot of the story he's living. The Northern Duchy had little to do with the plot of the Prince of Song, seeing as it was based off of the strife and the constant clashing of the Southern Duchy and the Capital where Technoblade resides. He's formed that connection in hopes of removing himself swiftly from the picture of the Prince of Song, by gaining an ally who could house him when times get rough.

Not even to house, seeing as he wants no connection to 'Theseus'. He just wants information.

So they've become pen pals since meeting the man. Admittedly, there hadn't been many letters between them, but Tommy had been insistent on dropping formalities and being casual. He could only hope not to irritate him with his manner of speech.

So he's got an attachment to characters who weren't very vital to the plot, which *was* why he'd liked Sam for the first two days. A nameless guard. Someone who couldn't be remembered.

But that changed when the man, the myth, the legend, Dream, visited *his* palace. The sapphire palace.

Tommy walked towards one of the cabinets in the palace—cabinets, apparently, is what they call the studies. Tommy is used to cabinets being like these small drawers and cupboards. That's incorrect, and he's long since been corrected on that matter. They pushed that aside as him thinking so little of the present studies, that they could be bigger, which is why they didn't really make a fuss about his inaccuracies. Cabinets were private areas of the palace, littered in a considerable number of places in the palace, differing only for the type and number of people they were to meet privately in those cabinets. There's an abundance of that, you know? There's one in every corner, and Tommy has no idea why. It was probably because they had no idea what to do with all that space.

Sam trails behind Tommy, and he walks so silently that Tommy had nearly forgotten he was there in the first place. He would have, actually, if it weren't for Sam speaking up midway through the journey from his History study room to the 'important people' cabinet meeting place.

"Prince Theseus," Sam hasn't shaken out the formalities yet, but Tommy was getting there. "How do you know Sir Dream?"

Tommy hums mindlessly, "I met him thanks to Captain Puffy, back when she, you, Dream and I met brother!" Tommy answered honestly. He couldn't get anything from lying about it,

so why would he? Hell, he should consider lying, not when he doesn't need to. "He was cool, so I exchanged letters with him. The last thing we talked about was his cool horse, Spirit I think?" Tommy babbled, because that's what he does best. He has a lot to say all the time, of course. It builds character.

He continues to speak, from Dream's cool horse, to the grass in that effortlessly thrive in the Northern Duchy. Tommy also started to talk about cobblestone, since he'd asked about it in his last letter with Dream but he's yet to receive any answers. He talks about how excited he is that he gets to ask it live.

All the while, Sam seemed to be listening from behind Tommy.

"I don't understand why they don't like cobblestone in the North, they should add it to *all* the architecture there. Did you know that the mossy types add character?" He turns to Sam, who walks along Tommy without a word.

When Tommy looks towards Sam, though, he notices something wrong. Call it an empath hunch, especially when the man is *radiating* with *hate*. Tommy stuttered from his ramble, and this brought Sam's attention to him.

That pure hate turned into something with adoration, and Tommy was nearly wordlessly gaslit into wondering if he really saw what he saw. It was frightening, what he saw.

Stiff shoulders seemed wider for a moment, and his grassy green eyes nearly seemed *toxic*, like it had no right being somewhere near organic being. The expression on his face was *cold*, in dark contrast from his usual chirpy self when Tommy would usually see him.

"Sam?"

"Yes, Prince Theseus?" And there's not a tinge of that searing hatred that Tommy *swears* that he saw on that face.

"Wow, you must *hate* cobblestone huh?" Tommy blurted out, and that made him want to shut up, keel over, and *die*. What was that? The man was ready to tear out some poor bloke's throat and here Tommy is, *taunting* the right hand man of the man who is literally destined to kill him.

To his relief, though, the man laughs. "No, no, it's not the cobblestone, Prince Theseus."

"What is it then?"

"How are you so excited about a man you've only met once?" Sam tilts his head curiously, "Dream, of all people too."

Tommy raises an inquisitive eyebrow, one that is his only indicator of his curiosity about why he specifically said 'Dream, of all people'. Is there something wrong with Dream? Is there some history he's not aware of? Backstory? Tommy doesn't know, and he *wants* to know. "Well, he's got a cool horse named Spirit, in case you didn't hear me earlier."

Sam laughs, and Tommy smiles. "A horse, huh?"

“He says that Spirit’s the fastest one!”

“Clearly you have never met Carl.” Sam mused.

“Who’s *Carl* ?” Tommy asks in distaste. That’s such a boring name. Carl. Carl with a C, he bets, not one with a K. Karls are clearly superior to Carls.

Sam’s eyes sparkle. “Well, you’ll meet him soon. Spirit is a cool horse but he’s not the best.” And there’s this dangerous glint, an odd promise.

Tommy has no idea what it meant, but in hindsight, maybe he should have guessed that it meant “He’s not the best, *not for long, at least.* ”

The rest of the day was uneventful, with Sam constantly on guard beside him, and Tommy and Dream just enjoying their time over tea with a conversation about nicknames (“I am *not* comfortable with you calling me that, Prince Theseus.” “Unless you call me Tommy I’m going to keep calling you Big D and you’ll be able to do *nothing* to stop it!”) and horses (“Do you know a Carl?” “Sorry, what?”) and siblings. (“Big brother Technoblade is cool!” “Yes, but my younger sister, Drista,--” “I can’t hear you, I’m the only good younger sibling in the world.” *Tommy nearly gags, and that conversation ends quickly. He doesn’t want to suck up to Technoblade any more than he already has*)

Day three ends with a few red flags, but that was alright. That’s alright!

Day four was uneventful, day five, and Sam was nowhere to be seen and so Tommy took that as an opportunity to hide all his goods in a span of a day. Day six, and Sam returns.

Day seven and Tommy, clearly an empath, senses something wrong among the courtiers. They were hiding, he realizes, steering away from his path when he walks, away from the lighter areas where they can be noticed, away from where Sam and himself frequently walk. He asks Clara: “Is there something wrong?”

She doesn’t answer at first, but Tommy insists, saying that if he doesn’t know, then he can’t help.

She gives in, if only for the fear that overtakes her priority to keep Theseus’ childishness and wonder in check.

“Some gardeners are being punished, Prince Theseus, for being sub par with their work.” Clara informs loyally, and the way she says it, the horror in her voice, makes him forget that he’s supposed to be four years old.

He quickly asks to see what was happening, and Tommy, accompanied by his maid, rushes to a scene to bear witness as familiar gardeners kneel in front of a *very* familiar man. It’s Sam, Tommy recognizes, and he’s holding a trident threateningly despite it being pointed at no one (*yet* , his mind supplies helpfully).

It's a private affair, one where the courtiers do not know of yet, only the gardeners and Clara.

"Sam!" Tommy calls, trying his best to keep his cheery, idiotic façade up. "What's happenin'?" He tilts his head cutely, eyes wide. It works when he's clearly afraid, he just has to shift fear to shock somehow in his expression.

He's used to it, being in front of Technoblade as his brother for a while now.

Sam turns his head, and that fearsome face had disappeared in favor of one friendlier smile. "Prince Theseus, what are you doing here?" Sam glances up at Clara, and Tommy could feel how her breath stutters from his mere presence. His mere gaze.

Tommy would say that he'd do the same if it weren't for the two lives that were at stake in front of him. "Woah, that's a cool fork." Tommy comments, trying to take attention away from Clara. He shakes his head, as if he realized that he got himself 'distracted' and focuses back on Sam. "Anyhoo, I wanted to go somewhere private where there weren't much courtiers, there happened to be a lot lately, and I thought to go here since the crowd sorta thinned out here!" Tommy explains,

And it's far-fetched, that explanation. It's the first thing he could think of. It's so specific but vague at the same time. He didn't have time to make a story, after all. It's got lots of holes in it— why did he want somewhere private? How could he notice the lack of courtiers in this area of the palace? There are more, he thinks, but in his nerve-wracked state, he's focused on keeping like three people other than himself alive in front of this dangerous man.

"So, what are *you* doing here?" Tommy playfully places his hands on his hips, squinting, exaggerating the look of a parent who is suspicious of a kid.

"I'm," He eyes the two gardeners kneeling before him, "*scolding* some bad people."

Tommy's eyes widens. Bad. *Bad*. The gardeners do their job perfectly, excuse you! They've been keeping his shrubs plenty healthy and his grass plenty dewy! How would this guard dude know what's the difference between good plants and bad plants, huh?

It's bullshit, utter bullshit, and he shouldn't have pushed away the gut feeling from the start that this was something horrible in the long run. "What did they do wrong?" Tommy asks. "They're the gardeners, right? They've done wonderful jobs!" Tommy cheers.

"The grass, your highness." Sam points out. "They've been muddy since the day I got here, patchy with dirt like someone hadn't cared for them. They needed to be *corrected*, since the gardeners were some of the few that weren't relocated and replaced from the Emerald Palace."

Tommy squints. The fuck? That's it? That's why?

Not because they stole anything?

Not because they, he doesn't know, *killed anyone*? Attempted to kill *Theseus*? Sam is punishing these poor blokes for *muddy fucking grass*?

The fear is replaced with irritation,

Tommy deals with this effectively by the end of the day. He tells Sam some stupid reasoning: "I like it that way! It's very decorative. I think they noticed how sad I got when they started cleaning it up." He raises a cheerful thumb at the gardeners, addled with shock at the exchange. "Very perceptive gardeners, kudos! Kudos!"

Then he tries to make a grab at Sam's trident, insisting that it looks cool and therefore it's his now: "Well, Sam, since you were gonna lend these to the gardeners, I want a cool pitchfork too!"

Then he ends up dragging Sam to the music room: "Come with me and Clara! I wanted to go somewhere quiet cos I didn't want anyone else to hear my *awesome* singing but now that you're here, maybe I can let you in on it!"

~+~

William kept a wary eye to the Blood Prince, unnoticed in his place. He didn't have a clue on how to read this stoic prince, especially when the entire future of the kingdom relied on how William did his mission. The mission to replace the monarch, to set the corruption of the country straight.

He didn't take long in staring at the Imperial Prince. Any way of reading the man is completely futile. William tore his gaze away from him, only to meet eyes with poisonous green orbs. William's breath hitched when he met someone who was openly... *dire* .

While The Imperial Prince was dangerous in a way that no one can read him, the man beside him, his *tail* , was dangerous in such a way that *everyone* can read his intentions.

And there was a fierce look constantly on his face. One of protection, and loyalty unbending. The man stared back at William who had been staring at the prince with an expression he didn't think to control. He didn't remember what expression he had on his face when he looked at the Prince, his *brother*, so he was unsure if he had sabotaged his intentions by displaying his heart.

But the man looked away, staring straight ahead, not saying a word.

William sagged with relief, but he made sure not to ever drop his façade. Eyes would be on him soon.

He will never be able to drop his façade again, with all the people who would be watching him.

When William entered the palace, sometime in the future of that particular event, he had never interacted with Sam until the end. Never an exchange of looks, of word, of touch or shove. No harm had come to William in his stay in the palace under the hand of the Blood

Prince and his tail, but he was dangerous when William could not see him. It was frightening. He had never looked at those frightening eyes again, save for the end, when the head of the Blood Prince's loyal dog rolls on the floor, poisonous green eyes staring at nothing, not anymore.

~+~

Day three's odd encounter with Sam, with the whole meeting with Dream, only started to make sense with the dawn of the second week , when Tommy received the last letter he would receive for a considerably long time. Tommy takes a moment to read the letter, and he rushes to get prepared for the day. He sees Clara, and the first thing he says to her is "I wanna meet brother!"

He had thought that there would be peace for even a few weeks more. He had so incorrectly assumed that he'd be safe, and guarded, and the least bit he thought that he could *breathe* for a moment without another weight on a *four year old boy's* shoulder, but alas, he's stuck in this book where not a single person could be trusted to see value in morals or life or literally anything.

But he has to take a stand sometime soon, and that time is *now* , even when he's a four year old *physically* . He's already been through *three separate situations* where he had to calm down this guard dog of Techno's from slaughtering the people in his house.

Tommy has a hunch that the person who slaughtered everyone in the Ruby palace was actually Sam, 'in the name of Technoblade'.

He folds the letter, keeping it in his drawer.

This is the last straw, of course.

He had received news in that letter that Spirit had passed away. Dream had written it in such a way that there was no gore, that a four year old could assume "ah, this horse had ran away for a place with infinite golden carrots!"

But no, Tommy knows that someone had *killed* Spirit. Couldn't have been an illness, or an accident. Dream takes care of Spirit, he knows he does.

And he's under the assumption that it was *Sam* .

What a fucking shame, he had been hoping that his brother wasn't set on murdering his youngest sibling anymore. It must be why he hasn't been getting Tommy on those tiring, fakeass tea parties anymore.

Too fucking bad, he's bringing a *riot* there on his own. He's fighting tooth and nail for his life right fucking now.

Chapter End Notes

Guys, guys I swear Sam is not crazy for no reason I swear. It'll come together eventually
I SWEAR

Anyway crack treated seriously huzzah

Also fun fact and sort of a spoiler, Sam was one of the people who had agreed to execute Theseus in the og story. Why? I'll let you dwell on that, I'm not gonna spoil any more than I already have

Edit 1-14-2022: I changed the title because the next chapter sorta deserves it more than this one does

Character development my fucking foot... unless?

Chapter Notes

unbeta'ed (not that it ever will LMFAO), unedited (this is a maybe)

speedran this before I do my college work

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Sam smiles, carrying Tommy in his arms while escorting him to his older brother.

“What are you so happy about?” Tommy asks, as if just earlier, Sam hadn’t nearly beheaded every courtier in the palace for fucking *rugs*. Yeah, Tommy had quickly de-escalated that situation, thank the stars. Whatever rocker Sam’s head was on must have toppled over and burned.

“I’m just happy that you’re getting along well with your brother, The Imperial Prince Technoblade.” He says, eyes crinkling.

Tommy nearly gags at the thought. That couldn’t be more far from the truth, actually. “I love my brother! Of course I’d get along well with him!” Tommy says, trying to refrain from putting Sam in a choke hold. He’s tempted. Sam is in a vulnerable position and he could very well choke the man.

Chances are though that he’d likely die before he could do any sort of damage other than emotional towards the green haired guardian.

“That’s true,” Sam says, and there’s a warmth in that tone that Tommy would have likely trusted if it weren’t for the fact that he had highly suspected Sam of murdering an innocent horse. “Your brother has been very lonely, before you came to his life.”

The young prince thinks dully: *When the man had abandoned his little brother, you mean?* Tommy would have scowled, but the most he allows himself to show is a stoic sort of expression. Unreadable, one that looks like a kid processing what’s going on.

“Why’s he lonely? He could always visit me, you know!” Tommy prods at it anyway. He’s curious, sue him. Why did he abandon Theseus? Why did he abandon him, a mere infant, and then kill him when he grew older and got the love he actually deserved.

Sam had a forlorn expression on his face, and Tommy had the urge to wipe it out. What did this man do to deserve that look on his face, when he’s done nothing in the past?

“He carries a burden.”

“Is that why he didn’t see Tommy until now?” Tommy nearly spits, but the exaggerated childish intonation he stressed out seemed more like... childish disdain.

The guardian holding him looks saddened. “I...” Come on, answer it. Answer it, hypocrite. “I don’t think I’m the right person to answer that.” Sam says instead.

Tommy blinks. But he’s the right person to *murder a fucking horse* ?

He’s grounded now, at least, knowing who these people really were. The type to murder on a whim, just like they got rid of Theseus in the original story.

He’ll have no part of it. He’s determined to live in this run of things. Damn them.

“That’s okay! What matters is that Brotherblade likes me now!” Tommy says mindlessly, just to add to his unconditionally loving character.

Tommy doesn’t notice the hurt expression on Sam’s face, nor did he notice *how* he worded that.

~+~

There was a peculiar expression on Theseus’ face when the Imperial Prince allowed William to sit at the same table . William did not fail to notice how the crystal eyes seemed to dull a bit, shining a little less under the dull light that was further away from the center of the room, under the chandelier. He set it aside as the light. It did wonders on the complexion of a person, much more to the way light reflects off the eyes of all things.

William has yet to test that, actually. Under the brown contact lenses he dons each time anyone other than his good friend Schlatt is within the premises, he has those exact same blue eyes. He hadn’t had much time to play with his features as of late, especially with how frequent visitors have been coming and going in the Southern Duchy’s estate recently.

Now he’d have more time to himself, without the contact lenses. He’s revealed himself to be of royal descent, after all. Obviously he’s to refrain from hiding it, lest he disgraces his bloodline by covering it up.

The Prince of Blood stares at the Warden wordlessly, but the guard looked as if he easily read the intentions of William’s blood brother.

“The Imperial Prince would like to discuss things alone , with his Majesty, the Second Prince.” he announces.

William didn’t get another chance to witness Prince Theseus as he departed, the young boy having already bowed and turned.

His attention did get called for, which takes his mind away from his pity for his little brother. He's known just as late as Technoblade about their relationship with William. He must feel... something.

William sets that aside for later. He's faced with a peril right now, and he can't discuss this with his little brother if he doesn't live long enough to do it.

"So, William, correct?"

"William Soot."

"I despise that."

He doesn't dare speak, lest he reveal a stutter.

"You're to remove that dangling second name of yours. It sullies the name mother gave you." Technoblade says, before he starts his meal.

William Soot, doesn't dare speak back— at least, he shouldn't, but he is infuriated beyond reason. It's his name, who is this man to dictate him? A prince has no right to private matters, not when it has nothing to do with the state. "I quite like my name." William spits, not thinking of repercussions. "It's how I lived, didn't you know? It's how your younger brother, Imperial Prince William, lived through what you mistook as my death."

He knew he was daring, when he says that. He knew that he was on the edge, that he's risking the aim of the rebellion with what it is that he's doing.

"And how, pray tell, did the dirt revive you?"

"I heard phoenixes rise from ashes. I do not see how I'm not the same."

*And William couldn't believe his eyes, when a smile sneaked its way into Technoblade's lips. "There truly is nothing like you, I suppose." Is all Technoblade said. "Do what you wish. You don't need my permission. We're **equals** after all." He says with finality, and William can't help but think bitterly about how Theseus has likely never been told the same despite the fact that the three of them, William, Technoblade, and Theseus, were all brothers Theseus and Technoblade more so, supposedly, but aren't for some reason.*

"Eat, though. If you don't wish to have multiple cooks without a job by the end of the day, I recommend that you do that."

A small quirk of his lips, one that he fought really hard to fight off, managed to creep its way into his stern expression.

This was unusual. He... he doesn't like Technoblade one bit, but he doesn't yet hate him.

There's something there, something salvageable. It's too early to tell, but he can't say.

Maybe he can still learn to love his people. To love Theseus.

William will have Technoblade wrapped around his finger. He'll make sure that they'll win with the least genocide possible, and that includes his own brother.

~+~

Tommy has no idea whatever the fuck William Soot saw in this fucker, because he's halfway about to take a butterknife and feed it to him . Not that he has a butterknife within reach. He's currently on a fucking *walk* with the man himself, Technoblade.

“What’s this place?” Tommy asks out loud, intending to be as obnoxious as possible so that he drives Technoblade back indoors where the food and utensils were so that Tommy has the option to stab something or someone—not that he would, but the *option* would be nice.

“You have eyes, Theseus.” Is all Technoblade says.

“I know, but I wanna know what this is doing in palace grounds!” Tommy gestures at the vast fields of... farmy stuff.

Look, he’s no stranger to farms. He’s been raised in one for a good chunk of his previous life, in fact! It’s just odd and really jarring to see this large chunk of mass dedicated solely to *farming* . Maybe it was normal, this entire farming thing in Imperial Culture, and Tommy *does* know that Technoblade is sort of fond of the Eastern Duchy, but he didn’t think that he’d made it a fucking *hobby* .

Technoblade doesn’t answer, but hey, Tommy’s got his suspicions and he’s technically the closest thing to omniscient in this world.

Tommy suppresses a huff, but let it be known that if he had the chance to let out a sigh without being executed for being deemed ‘snobbish to good and honest work’, he would definitely let out the largest, most disappointed sigh in the world.

The older prince doesn’t slow down nor stop in his pace to get to the a relatively small storage house adjacent to the farmland. Tommy follows, but he’s really fucking tired of these short legs.

He hates this body. He hates how when he speaks, he has to put more care into how he enunciates his words otherwise he would be replacing all his ‘r’s with ‘w’s and ‘s’ sounds with ‘th’s. He slips, sometimes, but that’s not often. Every word he speaks is calculated unless he’s alone (which he very rarely is). He can’t wait to grow and get an actual working tongue.

Tommy follows Technoblade’s quick and large strides with smaller and very very quick tiny legs. He’s going to have to grow tall with long legs, otherwise he’s going to have to stab this man’s legs himself so that he can catch up at the very least.

The boy very nearly bumps into one of Technoblade's legs when he discovers a bit late that the man paused a little.

"Alright, you've convinced me." Technoblade says, and he turns sharply around to look at Tommy.

Which would have scared Tommy if he wasn't more pissed than frightened.

Tommy tilts his head, not understanding what Technoblade means despite having an extra sixteen year experience. "Convinced wha?"

"You're here because you want something."

"I wanna hang out with you!" The biggest fucking lie he's ever said, and he has an inkling that Technoblade likely knows of it anyway.

"It's Sam, isn't it." It's not really a question, Technoblade looked certain.

And if Tommy wasn't looking up at Technoblade who was against the light of the sun, glaring down at him (whether it's Techno or the Sun glaring down at the poor child, Tommy would never know because he's fucking blind).

"He's clingy." Understatement of the year.

Technoblade gives him a nearly hilarious look of confusion: "You're-" He doesn't continue that sentence and instead pauses.

Yeah, Tommy knows that he's not *really* one to say. He's seen as the super clingy younger brother in everyone's eyes and he has a feeling that it's exactly what Technoblade was implying despite him probably assuming that he's faking the sincerity.

Tommy doesn't know what to expect, to be honest.

So, since he's four years old and he has nearly nothing holding Technoblade back from making him fertilizer for the mini-farmland beside a *PALACE* (CRAZY FUCKER), Tommy instead opts to be cute. "I had a nightmare." Tommy pouted, lolling his tongue as he speaks to add emphasis that he's four years old and that it is generally frowned upon to be murdered in a farm.

Technoblade crossed his arms, and raised an eyebrow. "A nightmare?" He prompts an explanation from Tommy, who happily obliges.

Tommy nods his head. "I saw someone hurt a horse, and the horse went to sleep forever." He explains, "And Sam is nice, but in my dream this dude with glowy green eyes did it!"

He tilts his head slowly, "And what do you want me to do about it?"

"Dunno," Tommy shrugs. "I just wanted to tell you!"

He hesitates a bit, before tilting his head down while looking up, creating the illusion that he's smaller than he is—and he's already tiny compared to this monstrosity. “Er, that's what brothers do, right?” Tommy did his best to sound unsure. “Puffy told me that her kids share a lot of stories together, about how their days go. I,” He pauses for a moment, “I can do that with you, right?”

Technoblade considers Tommy for a bit longer. “What made you think that you couldn't?”

Hook .

Tommy blinks. He was under the assumption that the man hadn't even wanted to see him when he'd been abandoned. No matter, this should play into his aims anyway. “So I can?” He asks, not answering Technoblade's question. If he had to answer honestly, it had to be the fact that Tommy knows his future.

But seeing this without the hindsight—er, *future* sight, he should have no reason to be hesitant around Technoblade.

He's been nothing but courteous, if not for that one time that Technoblade had literally left Tommy to drown.

Technoblade, as usual, takes a while to answer it. “Do what you want.” He says.

Line.

“We don't hang out a lot, do we?”

“You intend to change that?”

“Sure! I can, right?” the ‘r’ borders on a ‘w’, and it goes to Tommy's advantage.

Sinker.

“I don't understand why you keep asking for permission, Theseus.” Technoblade says, slowly and lowly, but Tommy could vaguely sense that the heat in his words were not directed to him. “You're royalty.”

“So are you, and since we're *equals* , I gotta ask if you're okay with it!” Tommy grins, winning. He's leading up to the topic slowly, he's going to get Sam to resign, and he's going to win his privacy back from Technoblade and his green (bother) guard. He's already got the man intrigued. He's gonna succeed, and he's going to meet Dream and try to lift his spirits after... well, *Spirit*.

Technoblade blinks, and he's quiet for a long time. The constant exchange of quips between them earlier had lost its momentum now that Technoblade hasn't given a response. Instead he looks at the field around them. “I'll tend to the farm another day.” Is all Technoblade says. “Go back to your palace, Theseus.”

Tommy's breath hitches when Technoblade goes to move. He walks around Tommy and ignores the kid even when he's left behind a little. In fact, he seems to be aware of Tommy

lagging behind, and he speeds up. Tommy follows after Technoblade, wanting to pitch in Sam's retirement from his position at Theseus' side, but he feels like now wasn't a good time.

Did he say something wrong?

If he did, he wouldn't be here standing and breathing, right?

The walk back to where the farm and the Palace meet is shorter than when they walked to the farm, for some reason. Maybe it's because of Tommy's lack of rambling, now that he's unsettled with how Technoblade responded to his brave quips.

He's instantly humbled. For a moment, he forgets what he came here to do in the first place. Instead, he's worried that he's done something to fuck up how Technoblade sees him.

Tommy reunites with Sam and Clara who stand attentively at the door. Sam had just been a hair's length away from carrying Tommy, who had his arms raised already so he could be brought up to his arms easier, when Technoblade calls for the guard's attention.

"Warden. With me." Technoblade says, before walking ahead into the palace.

Prince Theseus is carried by Clara, and as the Technoblade and Sam walk away, he spots Sam turn to look at the young prince with a concerned expression. Tommy's head, situated above Clara's shoulder, waves at Sam, before leaning fully.

Usually fear is accompanied by a quick heart rate, but how come he's feeling his chest's heart beat slowly, as if it was pushing viscous liquid?

Tommy doesn't know if he did anything wrong.

The next morning, Tommy wakes up. He spends his day without Sam trailing behind him.

What happened?

Chapter End Notes

Fun fact and sorta reminder:

Theseus' body is four years old and Tommy is 19 or 20 (even tommy is unsure himself). This means that while Tommy has the ability to form complex sentences and speak them

due to a mental advantage, the body doesn't necessarily catch up with the physical properties. Just like when Tommy was an infant and couldn't walk physically, but tommy knows how to walk.

His speech is the same! Tommy can speak, but not fluently because of a physical impairment that comes with Tommy's brain not easily fitting with the body he's inhabiting. The growth of a child's head is also a lot more rapid early on which is why Tommy would have the tendency to have 'r' become 'w's and 's' become 'th's.

With that said, when Tommy isn't aware aware, he's got a baby talk vibe going on, not a boss baby type gig HAHAHA I just can't bear typing with 'please' being turned to 'pwease' for 8 chapters straight asdlfkjsaldfkj asdlfjwlsd

Anyhoo, timeskip after the next chapter!

People change like the tides in the ocean, you know, like that song

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy approaches a different door with the gaudy decorations . He strongly dislikes the door. It's a dumb door, with gold etched in the frame and with the door being irrationally large. Why does it have to be so big? Is Technoblade a giant?

No, he isn't. In fact, Tommy is just about willing to bet that he'd be taller than the Imperial Blood Prince He was in the past life, actually. Tommy was a whopping six foot three, taller than his father.

He frowns.

Right. His family.

He hasn't thought about them in a while. He's had more concerns, but that doesn't mean that he completely planned to neglect his family. His *real* family. The one that he lost when he woke up as an infant one day.

This isn't the same world, likely, but Tommy wants to try. He wants to try and find if there is a version of his family here. A father, two brothers, a pair of best friends, a cow.

But Tommy... Tommy is certain that he lost them long before he woke up as an infant anyway. Nowadays all he can wonder is if they noticed if he was gone.

It's a dreary thought, but the ache made him feel more. It made him feel human instead of this revered toddler prince, treated like a child god among men. Innocent, without scars. Tommy doesn't have scars now, sure, but he feels the phantom pain of an arrow in his shoulder, and burns from a conflict he had to resolve.

He doesn't have them now, but he *had* them, and that's all that matters with scars.

Tommy looks up at Clara, waiting patiently behind him. She looks at him with a smile, and eyes telling him to take his time. This is for leisure.

Clara isn't family. Not even when she's come to raise him alongside so many other maids and ladies and courtiers. She isn't family when she's not Tommy's. She's *Thesesus* , but not Tommy's. The thought upsets him.

The feeling of loneliness aches when there's nothing else to be worried about.

Other than, of course, his impending doom lying behind two *gaudy fucking doors* .

Tommy suppresses a sigh, something he's been doing often, and he knocks.

Which had no point, by the way, because Clara opens the door for him. It was improper for a royal to open his own doors when there are people who are around to do that for him, apparently. He hates etiquette classes. He's just a little dude. He's not some god.

Well, he *is* a god. He's god tier. So many women back in his old life.

"Hello brother!" Tommy greets Technoblade, who is behind a desk full of paperwork. The man doesn't raise his head from his work, and merely sends a glance to Tommy before proceeding with whatever paperwork he's got to do.

One more thing that future Tommy will have to do, apparently. Paperwork. He's going to have to do paperwork one day.

Hopefully he's out of the castle before that. Prime forbid that he gets actual work. He's good with learning, sure, but he does not want to do *paperwork* of all things. Maybe he should go farming, or building. If he moves to the Northern Duchy, maybe he can introduce the holiness of cobblestone, or if he moves to the Eastern Duchy, he can farm all he wants, without a lack of food and without want for money.

"Theseus." Technoblade finally acknowledges. He raises his head after finishing a page. It doesn't take more than a look from Technoblade for Clara to bow, and leave the room. She shuts the door while she backs away with respect and reverence in her steps.

Technoblade pushes his chair back when he stands, the loud scratch of the wood against marble rings against Tommy's ears, but he doesn't mind it.

He moves around the table and walks away. Tommy follows wordlessly, as he usually does unless he's wordlessly dismissed.

The Imperial Prince pushes the door open, and Tommy runs before the doors shut behind him. He's right beside Technoblade, legs rushing to catch up to his long strides. Stupid body. He's got half the mind to request for prosthetics or something. Those exist, right? Prosthetics to make legs longer. Tommy should have excellent balance, enough to walk without having to heave large amounts of breaths before he actually gets anything done.

It doesn't help that the palace is stupidly large. Who needs this much space? It's stupid.

"Where are we going?" Tommy asks.

Technoblade glances at Tommy and looks back straight ahead without a word.

"Greetings and Blessings to the Imperial Princes of the Antarctic Empire." Tommy hears a familiar voice from the side, and he recognizes it as—

"Sam!" Tommy greets excitedly, with a smile on his face and a very wide and welcoming wave. Oh gods he was nervous for nothing! Sam looks to be in perfect shape, with the same uniform as before. Pristine and cheerful. At least he's got that going for him.

By the end of the day, Tommy guesses, he's succeeded. Sure Sam might have murdered a horse and probably did more vandalism to the part (he guesses that it's equally likely, now

that he's known to *murder a poor innocent animal*), but Tommy can't help but be relieved that his first words that were intended to sabotage someone didn't end up in a murder. He'd be a horrible person if he does that. That would suck a lot.

He approaches the three, with Tommy beside Technoblade and Clara from a respectable distance behind them. Sam goes to an abrupt stop, however, after looking up at somewhere above Tommy. The smile on his face turns sheepish before he bows. "I shall escort you two." He says, before taking his place beside Clara.

Tommy blinks.

What?

He looks up at Technoblade and only witnesses him proceed to wherever it is that they were going to.

Outside again. Damn, Technoblade must love it outside. He must be a lover of mud, probably. Technoblade seems like a pig that enjoys mud. That's a funny thought to distract him from the fact that this pig is in fact a fucking *boar* with all the capabilities of outright murdering a poor bloke.

They reach a tea set, with sweets placed on the table in a beautiful manner. This is oddly reminiscent of when Tommy had been sick when his presence was called for. He hated it back then, because his nose was clogged, and he hadn't had the appetite for anything. Technoblade takes a seat on his chair, and Tommy has to climb to his chair so he could sit on it.

His legs burned. This must be the reason why William thought that Tommy was sickly—he had burned too many calories just walking from one room to another in this palace, more than the food that he was even given in the first place.

Oh what he would do for a pair of legs like his old ones.

Tommy smiles graciously as Clara pours the two royals a cup of tea. He sips, and frowns when he notices that it's not the same one that he had before. What a shame, the previous flower tea was very fragrant. It seemed like the type to cure Tommy of his aches, and he'd desperately needed it. "What happened to the old tea?"

"The flowers went extinct." Technoblade answers.

He frowns. Well, at least he got a taste of it before it was finished off.

Tommy continues to take another sip of this terribly mundane (but good nonetheless) tea, when Technoblade speaks up: "Well?"

The boy snaps his eyes up to meet Technoblade's red ones. There's an expectancy in Technoblade's eyes, nearly looking bored as he stared back at Tommy's. "Yeah?" Tommy tilts his head, lowering his cup a little.

"Don't you have any 'stories' you want to tell, Theseus?" Technoblade drawls a little, mocking what Tommy had said before.

Oh.

Oh .

Is this what this is about?

A smile breaks across Tommy's face, (one that Tommy fakes a lot, not that anyone would know) and he giggles. "You remembered!" Tommy says cheerfully. "I have a lot! Just you wait." He does have a lot to say. He's known to make small talk turn big, rambles that would bore the other party.

Oh won't it be nice to be a bother to Technoblade, and the best thing is that he'd have nothing against Tommy that would be able to cause a whole execution.

"So, mud is my favorite thing in the gardens." Tommy would have a lot of fun exaggerating facts and irritating Technoblade.

Tommy comes back to his room in the Sapphire palace that day with a smug grin on his face.

He wins this time, dickhead.

The next day, Tommy wakes up at the crack of dawn yet again. Clara's is the first face he sees.

"The Imperial Prince wishes to see you, Tommy." There is a warm and happy look on her face.

Which is exactly how Tommy is in front of a god-awful pair of doors. He abhors this place. It's where Puffy resigned. He knows it's this specific door because it's the worst out of the lot. While it's true that Tommy absolutely adores gold, he also does not really adore displaying his riches. It seems like a dick move.

Except now there's a man waiting in front of those doors too, and it's not Dream. Is this place a meeting spot or something? Tommy meets new people here.

There is a man with dark hair stood in front of the door, arms crossed and leaning as if he was boredly waiting for the room to be unoccupied. One side of his face is scared, from his eye

down to his lower lip, and it had looked badass. Tommy wonders if he were to be scheduled for execution and manages to badassly evade the sword, he could probably get one as well.

It'd be a bitch to heal, but it'd be a badass tale to tell his many many wives.

When Tommy approaches, the man squints, but then his expression brightens up in recognition. "Prince Theseus!" He calls out cheerfully. "Oh, kid, I haven't seen you in ages now!" There's a gleeful disbelief in his eyes when he looks at Tommy.

Tommy blinks.

Who the fuck?

The man must have realized that he didn't have a single ounce of recognition in his eyes, because he blinks and stands formally. "Ah, sorry, you wouldn't remember me. I had two eyes the time I last saw you, kid." Tommy is... refreshed with how casual he speaks to him. "I gave you that gaudy toy ducky."

Tommy blinks.

He's *pretty* sure he's supposed to remember everything. He's old, after all, but not *too* old. Old enough to remember shit and retain memories like a sixteen year old. He doesn't remember being given a ducky,

But he *does* remember a golden ducky in his toy box (that he regrettably still has and is collecting dust in the shelves).

And he doesn't recognize the man by image, but he does recognize the description.

A man of short stature but with so much more confidence and wile in one pinky than a regular person would have in their whole body. A scarred eye, a tale of his loyalty to the country but never to royalty. Black hair and even darker eyes.

Alexis, Tommy recognizes. It's Alexis, the man who set Theseus up accidentally. He didn't mean it, no, but this man is destined to set his execution in stone. He was meant to poison Technoblade to secure the throne for William, but William, that unaware idiot, had drunk from Technoblade's poisoned chalice.

And it was pinned on Theseus.

"Quackity!" Tommy pointed at him with a smile. "You're Quacky's mom, so you must be Quackity!" He makes fun of the man, and there's not an ounce of hesitation in his eyes. Fuck him. Fuck him, because he's the *other* reason why he has to leave the comfort of a palace.

Clara cleared her throat, but there's an amused look on her face. "Clara! Clara look it's Quackity!" Tommy enables, pointing at Alexis as if he was a creature from the Zoo.

Quackity looks confused, and he looks at Clara for an explanation.

"My apologies, Sir Alexis of the Southern Duchy."

“Alex is fine.” Quackity shakes his head with an amicable smile. “I just want to know what’s up with ‘Quackity’.”

Clara looks to be trying her best to keep a normal, impassive expression, but there’s a smile on her face. At least it passes as ‘polite’ and not ‘you just got called names by a kid’ type of smile.

“Sir, Quackity is the mother of Quacky in Prince Tommy’s stories. He likes to create backstories out of certain toys of his.” Clara looks very proud at Tommy, and the kid turns red.

“They’re not stories. They’re true. That’s Quacky’s mommy!”

She sends him a look.

Quackity looks at Tommy, and he kneels so he could go eye level with him. “So, can you let me meet my kid one day?”

Tommy blinks.

He recognizes that in his eyes. Ambition. It’s what killed Theseus.

This prick’s confidence is about to get squashed like a fucking bug.

So Tommy frowns, and he crosses his arms. “You’re a bad momma! I won’t let you get custoh-dy over Quacky! You gave him over to me! I was a baby!” He scolds. “Bad Quackity! Bad!”

Tommy continues to make a ruckus, and Quackity stands from his kneeling position and backs away with hands raised.

The ruckus caused the door to slam open, and in the blink of an eye there is a trident pointed at Quackity’s neck.

Sam.

Tommy gasps, and Clara instantly takes the boy and puts him behind her. She tries to cover his eyes, but Tommy is stubborn. “Wait! No! Don’t hurt Quackity!” Tommy shouts at the top of his lungs.

Sam doesn’t move. Quackity is against one of the frames of the door, one hand raised and the other holding back one end of the trident in hopes that it doesn’t pierce immediately through his neck.

“Quackity?” There are two other people approaching the scene. There is a man with ram horns placed at the sides of his head, and there is the Imperial prince, looking deadly despite not holding a single sword.

“Quacky’s momma!” Tommy pointed at Quackity, whose eye is darting from one person to another in hopes that *someone* would save him. “If you kill Quacky’s momma, I dunno what

I'd tell Quacky?"

Technoblade sighs, and turns his head to Clara.

"Q-Quacky is P-Prince Tommy's toy duck." Clara said. "Sir Qua- I mean, Sir Alexis had been the one to gift it to Tommy so he- he assumed that Sir Alexis is 'Quackity', the missing Duck mom." She explains.

Tommy holds Clara's hand away from his face, making sure that his eyes are stuck on the trident. Surely Sam wouldn't kill in front of a child. He's stopped this before. He can certainly do it again.

"And the screaming?" Sam growls, inching the trident closer to Alexis' neck.

"Prince Tommy had assumed that Sir Alexis wanted to take Quacky away when he said, I quote 'will you take me to see Quacky one day?'. " Clara blinks. "Something along those lines, at least. I apologize, your highness, your grace. It was too sudden and I-"

"Don't kill Quackity!" Tommy shouts, cutting off Clara who seemed likely to overheat at the moment with the amount of fear she had in her voice. "Quackity might have left Quacky, and Quackity might be a bad momma but he's still Quacky's family! He's still family!" Tommy shouts, bullshitting some childish reason as to why Quackity is under his protection of some shit like that.

" *Warden* ." Technoblade says, and the trident disappears. Sam assumes a less aggressive position, but still stands threateningly close to Alexis.

Oh, so that's what happens. He hadn't seen where Sam had hid that last time.

"Okay, what the fuck." The man with ram horns complained. "You were about to execute my fucking ward because of a kid!"

Ah, so that's Schlatt. The duke of the Southern Kingdom.

Looks like he has no chances of hiding in the South. He wasn't counting on it in the first place anyway. Fuck them.

"This kid, Jay S. Schlatt," Sam growls, eyes poisonous green. "Is a Prince of the Antarctic Empire. Watch your language." There is threat in his eyes, and knives in his tone.

" *Warden* ." Technoblade growls. "That's enough." He glances at Tommy, eyes red and like the fires of hell.

Tommy cowers, and hides in Clara's skirt. Oh shit. Oh fuck. He's fucked up. He only wanted to make fun of them. He really only wanted to make fun of Alexis. He didn't mean to cause this much. He didn't mean to-

"This meeting has ended anyway." Technoblade announces. "Theseus, inside." He turns around, royal cape swishing in with his abrupt turn.

Schlatt rolls his eyes, and he moves out. “We’re going, *Quackity* .” He pulls Alexis into the hallway.

Tommy doesn’t dare look back, despite feeling a stare go directly at his head. This was awkward.

He lets go of Clara’s skirt, and follows Technoblade. Clara isn’t allowed to follow inside, and Sam doesn’t seem to be following either.

The door closes behind them.

Tommy is *frightened*.

Technoblade drops his crown to his throne, and unclasps his cape. He pushes a curtain, revealing a bed right behind the throne.

What the fuck?

“I was getting tired of Schlatt’s tirades. You did a great job, Theseus.” Technoblade says monotonously, tossing the cape inside. He turns, and he carries Tommy by the stomach, with Tommy facing downwards. Tommy is too shocked to react to this, but if it had been any other situation, he would have made some remark or something.

“Huh?” He daringly asks out loud.

“Morning meetings are the worst.” Technoblade says, still not answering his confusion.

Technoblade sits Tommy down in the bed, riddled with so much pillows and stuffed blankets. There is the cape, with fur rim that was way softer than it looked. It must be why the man likes wearing it so much. “Sleep.” Technoblade says while he climbs in and lies down beside Tommy.

What the fuck?

Isn’t he mad? Infuriated? Hasn’t Theseus created a reason to be killed? Isn’t he disposable or something?

“You’re thinking too much.” Technoblade grunts. “Lie down.” He placed a large hand on Tommy’s face, and pushes the kid to lie down on the surprisingly comfortable hiding place behind the throne room. “Sleep.”

Tommy’s fear turns into rage, because he doesn’t understand what the hell is going on. “I can’t sleep, it’s morning.” Tommy complains, but Technoblade’s hand is still on his face. He has half a mind to lick what he can reach or something.

“You know,” Technoblade’s voice is monotonous as he speaks. “In my years of living, I’ve learned of so many ways to make a person *sleep* .” He says. “Do you know, Theseus, that one of the quickest way to sleep is either completely painful, or completely painless?” There is a

threat in his voice, and Tommy refuses to let out a small ‘eep’. “Sometimes, the effects are so good that they end up *never waking up* .”

He yawns, “wow, it’s so early it’s like it’s night.” Tommy says, a complete change of attitude and opinion.. “Is that why we’re sleepy?”

Tommy did sleep, and he wakes up alone. He’s greeted by Clara, waiting patiently behind the curtain in an empty throne room.

~+~

William cooed at his little brother. “You like sweets?” William asked Theseus, who was savoring his hidden stash of sweets, sharing the limited pieces to his brother—not that he knows yet. He hasn’t had the proper opportunity to reveal his true identity. He planned to tell him soon, before he revealed it to the public and by extension Technoblade.

It feels right, for Theseus to be the first to know.

“Yeah,” Theseus answered, stuffing the candy to the side of his cheek.

William ruffled his little brother’s hair, “I’ll make sure to bring more when I come back.” He said with a grin stretched on his face, matching with Theseus’ cheerful ones.

Theseus to William was like the sun. The closest thing to family William has had since he woke up as William Soot rather than Imperial Prince William. It’s a shame he hadn’t been there for the earlier parts of Theseus’ life, but he’s here now, and he’d be here forever for his little brother.

He’s not leaving. Not again. Not unwillingly. Not by choice.

Theseus will never be alone again.

He swears on the blood that flows through their veins.

Never again.

~+~

“Good afternoon, brother!” Tommy greets, smile stretched wide. This was getting tiring. He’s been going back and forth between the two palaces with every meeting. Imagine the

distance Tommy has had to walk during those times? It's a bother! It's a pain! It's downright horrendous!

"Theseus." The same monotonous acknowledgement. He doesn't blame him. It must get boring every once in a while.

But it's worth it whenever Tommy sees Technoblade's eye twitch, underlid nearly turning to bags with the amount of times that thing had twitched. Oh Tommy has been doing his work, alright. For the past week, Tommy has been exaggerating his stories and tales into childish renditions, only for Technoblade to correct every factual discrepancy so irritatingly. Tommy *enjoys* being a bother. It's wonderful. It's *revenge* for every mile Tommy has to walk just to get from the comfort of a chair to the comfort of another chair.

It's been four days since Technoblade implemented this daily schedule, where Tommy does not go a day without seeing Technoblade at least once.

And those four days has created nothing less than a headache for both the Antarctic Princes, and leg cramps for the younger and shorter prince.

He wonders how Sam and Clara, who was always trailing behind the two, copes with it. Do they have ankles made of steel? Soles that bounce them back up? He needs to know.

"Tommy," Sam calls from behind. Tommy turns around to look at him. "You look tired. Do you want me to carry you there?" He asks with concern in his gaze.

He was just about to answer that yes, yes he is tired and he wants someone to carry him, but Technoblade takes a step closer to Tommy so that he's beside the kid. Sam doesn't move any further than he already has.

Tommy looks up at Techno, who has a bored and unreadable expression on his face. "Twenty steps back." Technoblade says,

And Sam, like the dog he is, takes twenty steps further from Tommy, and is literally a large distance away from Clara who is already a considerable distance away behind the two. There is a playful grin on Sam's face, and Technoblade looks to be content with the distance. He turns to Tommy, who doesn't really know what to expect.

"You wanna be carried?" He asks quietly enough for only Tommy to hear, and definitely not loud enough for *Sam* to hear.

Tommy blinks.

What?

"Sure?" He says, unsurely.

He doesn't breathe when Technoblade lifts him, and especially not when Technoblade grunts under his breath: "You're awfully light." He comments, and takes Theseus into his arms.

"You should eat more." He adds while he lets Theseus on his chest, letting one of his arms be sat on by the small child and the other supporting the kid's back.

Tommy blinks,

What the fuck is going on?

With Techno facing the front, it's easier for Tommy to look behind. He looks at Clara and Sam with a confused expression, hoping one of them would mouth him an answer to his wordless question: to which both of them respond with thumbs up (Sam just a bit further away than Clara is).

"Malnourished children's arms are easier to break than healthy children." He adds. "A lot less force needed to make them cry. You don't want people making you cry, hm?"

Ah, there it is. The underlying threat.

They go to tea that day with Technoblade sitting in front of him, and Tommy hadn't even needed to climb the chair because Technoblade had been the one to place him there.

Tommy proceeds to go about his day prior to when he saw Technoblade in the morning. He tells Technoblade about things he learned in class today, about how his favorite professor is Henry Arrington.

For a moment, just a moment, Tommy forgets that this man is the one destined to murder him.

Chapter End Notes

fun fact: the thing behind the throne is a nest. I'll leave you guys to the theorizing on the mind of Technoblade.

also next chapter will have a timeskip <3

The acquisition of desserts and Clementine (and maybe a very tall friend, but he's a wrongun)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy scowls at an innocent wicker basket as if it had killed off his entire bloodline . It's empty. His secret stash of chocolates with golden leaves is *empty* . See, Tommy isn't a material child. No, he's a child of necessity. He's a child of practicality.

But he draws the line here. He's getting flashbacks of when his good gold, currently still stashed in the roots of the trees that separate the garden of the Sapphire palace and the Emerald palace, had been taken out.

He's being deprived of his goodies. Nevermind the bullshit they're talking about his teeth. It's all a lie. He's going to lose them anyway, it'll fall off of his mouth easily.

Not only that, but he's been checking at his stash of riches and he's finding that it's been dwindling. Someone has been stealing his gold, and whoever it is—they're fucking lucky they found it because Tommy is not in the proper place to reprimand them for it, If they find out that he's been planning on smuggling gold away, he'd be beheaded for being corrupt this early on.

But he can solve the prior problem, to make up for the issue of his dwindling wealth.

"Prince Theseus!" Some maids gasp as he runs through the rugless floor of the palace. "Please don't run, my Prince!" Some courtiers begged but they did nothing to leave the position they're in in the first place, only giving the prince some warnings.

Geez. He's six years old now. He's got longer legs. He's going to be *fine* . He's got a well-grown set of limbs and he's going to do all the running he damn wants. No wonder children like to run before they walk—cos the joy of longer limbs? It almost outmatches *chocolate*.

Tommy reaches his desired location, and spots that familiar gaudy little door handle installed in an equally, if not more, gaudy pair of doors.

He reaches up to the handle, which was once impossible a year or two ago, on his tippy toes and at the edge of his fingers. Still there's the satisfaction of being independent, no longer having to get one of the maids to open Technoblade's door, or godforbid—having to *knock*. He doesn't bother knocking on those gaudy doors anymore. He's grown a bit, thankfully, but he still has a considerable height that he has to grow before he comes back to his full potential. By thirteen he'll have at least half of his original power. His prowess. His ability to just book it out of there.

Not that he needs it as much. He's been doing a thing called Exposure Therapy where he's stuck to Technoblade's side like glue. The exposure therapy helped loads with the Tommy Tolerance he's building up for Technoblade.

Especially with the fact that he no longer needs to knock.

It just ruins the element of surprise, you know?

He opens the door, and as expected, Technoblade is at his desk, with gold lining the edges of the table, and the corinthian legs of the table seemed to have been intricately lined and decorated with gems and gold. Tommy hated that table, evidence being the small dents on the varnish where there shouldn't be any—not that Technoblade gave a sign of noticing. “Hi Techno!” Tommy greets with a smile, one that's especially saccharine.

“You forgot to knock.” Technoblade notes blandly, not even raising his eyes to look at his little brother. Not that he's bothered. If he should be bothered, it would have been about the fact that Tommy called Technoblade by a nickname rather than the formal *brother* that he's so easily taken. Not that it's a large feat. He accidentally called Technoblade by Techno about six months into their daily encounters, and since then Tommy had taken to calling Technoblade by nicknames.

Tommy just laughs it out. Technoblade does nothing to punish him.

“What do you want?” Technoblade asks rather monotonously, still not looking at him, focusing on his papers.

Tommy moves to the couch, and sits comfortably on it. He leans on one of the arm rests, placing his head above the arm rest. “Do you want to eat sweets with me?” He asks.

“Don't your maids feed you?”

At that, Technoblade meets Tommy's eyes, and there is a specific danger in those ruby eyes. Tommy is familiar with that type of threat.

Usually that means danger.

Just not to him.

“They do! I wanna eat with you though.” He pouts, and he's happy how it still works at six years of age—not that it's obvious, but Technoblade has somehow responded relatively positively to his antics, based on how his already horrible aggressive behavior turns worse when he puts on the formal mask and drops his eccentric behavior.

There's a word somewhere out there to describe what he is, but Tommy doesn't really remember what it is.

He blinks. Waiting.

Technoblade then snaps his fingers, and Tommy knows through his lectures in Royal Etiquette (which he likes to call Palace Mechanics instead) that it triggers a magical line somewhere, tugging at a bell near the servant's quarters.

Tommy grins. "Yeah!" He whoops as the servants enter with trays upon trays of desserts and beverages in large pitchers.

He looks at the meal with excitement, nearly vibrating at the sight of the desserts being placed on the table.

"You seem really excited." Technoblade drawls.

"Yup!"

"More so than seeing me."

Tommy blinks innocently. "Whatever do you mean?" The six year old asks with a tilt of his head, knowing that his obviously adorable face could melt even this asshole. "I like seeing you-" he extends his hands upwards, stretching up, "*this* much!" he grins.

And that seemed to make Technoblade content.

When Tommy sits in front of Technoblade, a plate full of desserts.

He eats it, and looks at Technoblade.

Right. He's six years old. He turned six a month ago, but he can't help but believe that he's still physically four. He's two years older since he's met Technoblade, and he's proud to say that he's got some progress on the whole Technoblade Won't Kill Me plan.

Progress report on the No I Will Not Die plan:

- One, Tommy's relationship with Technoblade had maybe, somewhat, *possibly* improved just a smidgen, but he swears to anything holy, or to any god or prime up there that he's still out to *kill* him.

When Tommy was a month away from his fifth year, They were in what Technoblade calls his private garden, which, in contrast, Tommy likes to call the Royal Farm, where

they farm a lot.

It's not frequent, actually. Tommy doesn't go there often, which is curious because now it makes him wonder how often Technoblade goes here. He was quite adept with farming in his past life, and seeing this made him think of the farms back home.

He hasn't thought of that in a long time.

He decided not to think of it.

There was one small portion of the mediocre sized farm with wheat. Tommy tried to weed it out that day. It's neglected a bit, compared to the potato farm just beside it. He weeds it in peace while Technoblade was likely somewhere in the farm.

One moment, though, he was pulling at the leaf of the stubborn weed, and at the pull of the weed he stumbled back a bit.

Conveniently too, just in time to dodge something that his eyes couldn't see, but his ears could catch— a rustling of grains, followed by silence.

And when he finally looked up, he noticed how the wheat was shorter than he remembered just a second ago where he was standing before he stumbled back. He looks up, and sees the perpetrator:

Technoblade, in his more casual attire (a loose white blouse, free from the ruffles and cravat and the golden trinkets that usually hang from his coat), holding a handful of wheat in one hand and a sickle in the other.

"Theseus," Technoblade called. "Be more attentive." He said, before proceeding to collect the rest of the wheat on that portion of the field.

He gulped, holding onto the weed that saved him for dear life.

*What the **fuck**?*

- Two, Technoblade at most Tolerates Tommy, but only when Tommy isn't all too suck-uppy to Technoblade.

"Your etiquette classes seem to be lacking, Theseus." Technoblade commented once,

And Tommy, who took it to heart, took his etiquette classes seriously. As much as he abhors the The next time he met Technoblade, he put his practice into action. Stood straight, never looking him straight in the eyes, head lowered always.

When they drank tea, Tommy didn't speak unless spoken to. He was told that when someone of higher status invites them to tea, it is customary for the visitor to not initiate the conversation, seeing as they weren't the one who took the initiative to send an invite in the first place.

It took the clacking of the teacup on the saucer for Tommy to take a chance and look at Technoblade's expression, only to find that he did not look pleased.

He didn't look angry, no, just a lot more irritated.

And what the fuck? Did he do anything wrong?

"Oh, is my, uh, my etiquette not to your liking?" Tommy asked, letting the nervousness through.

For some reason this irritated Technoblade a lot more.

"Well practiced." Was all Technoblade said, before he stood from where he sat, looking down dangerously at Tommy. "Dismissed."

That moment, Tommy was mentally counting all the riches he's acquired. He could run away, but he was five at that time and he certainly wasn't a very good runner with his short legs.

Sam had been the one to pick him up that time, and while they were a bit estranged at the time, Sam seemed rather amused. "Prince Tommy, I think it's because Technoblade doesn't want you to treat him like a stranger." He explained back then. "He's become rather fond of you, to treat him like you're of a way lower status than him implies that you're widening the gap between you two."

Ah.

So he's being a prick is what's going on.

When will this pig bastard make up his mind?

- And finally, three, Technoblade has been slacking on trying to kill him.

Thankfully the lack of any examples is a sign of the pig bastard being inactive with the murderous rampage.

As he snacks on the sweets, enjoying his decent amount of palace made delicacies, he's called by Technoblade: "Theseus,"

He looks up, fork still in mouth.

“No one has been bothering you, am I correct?”

Tommy raises an eyebrow.

Is anyone *supposed* to be bothering him? He doesn't suppose that being bothered by Technoblade himself is going to be an answer that allows him to keep his head, right? “Not that I know of?” He thinks back, and he's seldom exchanged letters with Dream now, just a continuous and rather arduous chain of tales back and forth with long gaps in between. He also thinks back to Puffy, who frequents at the Sapphire palace at odd nights.

“No, I don't think so?”

There's a satisfied look on Technoblade's face. “Good.” He says, and leans back. “Eat more. You look scrawny.” He says, “When I was young, I see people break kids like you really easily.” There's a cold look on his face.

Tommy, already used to the oddly balanced positivity and negativity in his older brother's words, just smiles. “Thanks for worrying for me Techie!” He says, and eats.

Technoblade looks satisfied.

He scowls internally.

Yeah, fucker, Tommy was gonna eat this with or without his dumb comment anyway.

Tommy looks confusedly at the creature in front of him . It's... vaguely a dog, but with thin hands. It looks like a rat, but it's a lot more... *round* . Tommy tilts his head looking at the creature, and it tilts its head back at him. It's... sorta cute.

He's currently in the Emerald Palace's garden after Technoblade had to entertain some Nobles from the East, For some reason, Technoblade had been against letting Tommy see these nobles, saying something about ‘bothersome’ or ‘annoying’ . If he's honest, he doesn't know if he's referring to Tommy or the Nobles, but he's not gonna challenge that authority.

Now in a bush where he's got plans of looking for a place to stash his goods in the near future, he discovers this weird creature in front of him. It's got gold fur, or brown, it seems very blond and shiny actually, so maybe it's golden but nearer to the bronze side? He can't... comprehend what's going on with this.

He squints, and recognizes what animal it is.

Tommy gasps, and his eyes nearly sparkle at the realization. A raccoon! This thing is a raccoon!

He very nearly coos at the sight. It's adorable! A raccoon! A baby one at that!

The prince reaches out to welcome the raccoon, and it tilts its head to the other side. Tommy grins, it's adorable, what the hell? "Here, do you want, uh" he checks his pocket, and puts out a shiny trinket. Its eyes sparkle at the sight. "Do you want a toy?" he asks, not that he'd give it. It's *his*, and it's his riches!

The raccoon titters, and it cautiously steps closer to Tommy with hesitant footing.

Then it launches itself at Tommy, causing him to screech and drop his trinket. It doesn't make a sound when it collides to the dirt.

Wait, it didn't.

The raccoon caught it!

It steps back a little, staring at Tommy with a hiss, and it bites the trinket and scampers away.

Oh no. *Fuck no* Tommy is not letting that rat free! He chases after the thing.

"Come here!" Tommy shouts. "Give it back you rat!" He shouts at it, and it doesn't even glance back at Tommy. It just keeps on going.

What a little shit!

It leaps into a bush, and Tommy follows. He catches its white? Bushy tail, and pulls it.

"AAH" A panicked voice yelped, standing straight at the sensation of its tail being pulled.

Tommy blinks, and looks up at the stranger in a cloak. "Er, sorry?" He says, still astounded by the presence had seemed to have just emerged from the bush.

"C-Can you please let go of my tail..?"

"OH RIGHT Sorry, here." He drops it, and looks up at the stranger. "Er, who are you?" And what are you doing here? He wants to ask. The person doesn't seem familiar.

The stranger blinks, and looks at his hand, holding the animal he was chasing earlier, scratching at air in hopes it gets to harm anything in its way. "Ah! I was, er, hunting?" the stranger scratched its neck.

Tommy observes the stranger.

He's tall, that's one of the more noticeable things other than the odd dual tone he has on his hair. One side is white, specifically the left side, and one side is black. It's not particularly odd. He's seen horned people, people with wings, red eyed people, and he himself literally has crystalline eyes. He won't judge.

But one particular thing he could blame this tall person for is his exuding aura of *wimpiness*.

Tommy is instantly irritated by his presence.

“What for?” Tommy glares. “You’re holding my pet.” He points at the raccoon, trinket still in mouth. Upon being pointed at, the raccoon seemed to calm down, and it eyes Tommy.

It looks like it’s pleading.

Does it think Tommy will give it a better fate than whatever this man is going to do to it? Hell no.

But it’s cute.

He’ll make a decision later.

“Oh, well,” The tall person squints at the animal in its hands. “It’s not a very ordinary pet. You sure you wanna keep it?”

“Oh, just cos it’s a blond raccoon?” He scowls. “What, are you gonna bully it ‘cause it doesn’t have the typical gray fur? Shame on you!”

“N-No! Not that!” He shakes his one hand, the other still holding at the scruff of the raccoon. “It’s just that, er, it’s *magical*, and I think I need it?” He shrugs.

Tommy’s eyes narrow. “You *think*?” There’s an accusatory look on his face.

“My memory isn’t that great due to the sudden lack of magic, it’s why I need it,” he mumbles under his breath. “Sorta need the emergency food...”

“*FOOD?*” Tommy screeches. He launches himself at the wrongun. “You don’t just eat other people’s pets!” Tommy scolded, climbing the freakishly tall man. Hell, even Technoblade could be towered over by this wimp. He’s that tall.

“Wait!” He tries to get Tommy off without hurting him, but he couldn’t do anything.

With a snap of his fingers, Tommy is floating away, “What—” He looks at himself, and then at the stranger. “What the hell man!” He swings his legs and arms to kick at the stranger, but he can’t reach him. He’s floating. That’s not a particularly easy feat, especially when lifting an entire kid. Magic is particularly hard to come across, so to see him just snap his fingers without as much of a chant, much like Technoblade himself, well, it’s threatening- “You’re a magical wrongun!” He declares, and continues to uselessly wriggle where he is. To no avail, because he’s out.

It’s threatening, but he’s really pissed right now. No one just *eats* a pet raccoon!

He... sorta looks like the raccoon just earlier. He exchanges a look with the raccoon held by the back of its neck, and they both seem to have an agreement: *attack*. The raccoon titters angrily, and all of a sudden Tommy is falling from where he was floating earlier.

The stranger, surprised, catches Tommy but he had to drop the raccoon first.

It lands on the stranger's robe, and climbs upwards until it reaches Tommy. When situated on his shoulder, the raccoon immediately *bites* at the stranger's hand.

Tommy drops to the floor, but now he's got time to catch himself. "Hah! Major fucken L."

The stranger squints, holding his bitten hand. "Are you supposed to curse?" He asks instead.

"I can curse as much as I very well fucking please!" He belts. Tommy turns to the newfound ally on his shoulders, and raises a fist. "Fistbump little dude." He says, and surprisingly, the racoon reciprocates the little fistbump.

He would 'awe' at that, but he's currently facing a creepy tall dude wearing a robe in the middle of his brother's forest—wait, he means *garden*.

They glare at each other for a while, he and the two-toned fucker, until the latter gives way to a look of recognition. "Oh! You're odd!" He states, looking at Tommy's eyes. "You've got jewel eyes!"

"Yes, bitch, I'm royalty!" He feels *free* finally letting his curses out his mouth.

"Oh! You must be Phil!" Ranboo smiles. "Sorry, I didn't get a heads up from Kristen—"

"Huh?"

He blinks. "Okay, not Phil, er, which one are you?"

"I'm his kid? I guess?"

"Oh, nice to meet you."

They stand still for a bit. Even the racoon on his shoulder seemed to be confused about whatever air there is right now. "Er, what year is it?"

Tommy blinks. "Er, 1114 I think?" Tommy says curiously.

The stranger whistles. "Oh, I'm doomed."

"Why?"

"I'm late."

"By how long?"

"Err, a hundred..." He says sheepishly.

Ah, okay. It makes sense, he supposes. People with scaly skin, horns, red eyes, jewel eyes, dual hair, and *immortals*. Okay, this is sort of messed up. Should he be panicking? He seems sincere. "Okay, I have my raccoon now, and you have... whatever is going with you. Bye?" He steps back.

The man blinks. “Uh, I don’t think we’re done.” His eyebrows furrow. “Look, okay, I sort of need to eat that.” He points at the raccoon, and it hisses at the offensive finger.

“What the fuck!” He screeches, pulling the raccoon to his arms protectively. “You don’t eat people’s pets! What are you?!”

“Look, that isn’t a normal animal!” He defends, “It’s not even an actual animal! It’s literally just magic taking a shape and form.”

“And an animal is flesh and meat! What the fuck is your point!?” Tommy screeches, and the raccoon titters in agreement. “You look at adorable little Clementine and you want to *eat him!*?” Tommy shouts at him, hoping that someone at least hears the ruckus he’s making.

The man places his hands on his head, and does a patting motion, as if he was forcing his head to think. “Okay, look, that is going to perish eventually, when it does *then* can I eat it?” He asks,

“He is not an *it* .” Tommy corrects. “Clementine.”

“Okay, can I eat it when it dies?”

“Clementine!”

“Okay! Can I eat Clementine when *he* dies?” He seems frustrated.

Tommy blinks, and looks down at his little pet. “Would you mind?” He asks,

The raccoon blinks, and Tommy, the little moral-less kid he is, looks up at the man. He's powerful, even probably to the point that he could contest Technoblade himself. He could use this as a bargaining chip. “Alright, but what do I get from this?” Tommy demands.

“Er, a favor?”

“*A* favor?”

He groans. “Fine! I do *some* but not all. Okay?” He argues.

“Deal! That’s multiple. That’s *at least* two throughout my entire life!” Tommy says with a grin. He looks down at Clementine, sensing the raccoon looking at him with the slightest bit of displeasure. It's okay, he'll give him a lot of treats for as long as it lives. His sweet little bargaining chip.

“Fine!” The stranger says, then he blinks with some realization. “Err, what do I call you by?”

Tommy smiles. “I am Prince Tommy ‘Theseus’ of the Antarctic Empire!”

“Ranboo.” He exchanges. “I’d say it was nice to meet you and Clementine, but–” He glares at the raccoon, and it hisses at him in exchange. “You’re alright. You’re a pretty nifty kid, I guess.”

“Thanks. You’re tall.”

“That’s... not a compliment.”

“Take it as one, I dunno what else to compliment wronguns on.”

"You know, I don't think I like you."

"Same here, bitchboo!"

Chapter End Notes

rushed chapter, i was in the middle of writing vent angsty fanfiction but I decided that I wanted Ranboo here and Soon. (if i make major changes in this chapter, i'll tell yall in another note heehoo)

Also, next chapter is especially delicious. That's one of the things I wrote during my angst-filled writing haze LMFAO

(By the way, a lot of things Likely don't make sense but I swear it will eventually. That's just the problem with Unreliable Narrator I guess WHEEZE)

Parallelism is strangely similar to the word paralyzed, is it just me?

Chapter Notes

I didnt realize i misspelled the chapter name WHY DID NO ONE TELL ME
HAHAHSJEDJS /lh

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

William woke up, to the sight of flowers blooming where they did not belong. William, to the best of his abilities, could not recall how his room acquired all the flowers in the first place, nor could he recall how he got into this bed tonight either. It was odd, and it was hazy.

He sat up, and there was immediately a gasp to his side and a scattering of footsteps that followed it. As he looked to see where it had come from, he saw the tail end of the palace maids' uniform fleeing from his room. Had anything happened?

Instead of thinking further of it, he further examined the room, seeing flowers of various colors, shapes, and sizes decorating the room. He didn't particularly adore the sight of it. He preferred to see the flowers in the garden where it belonged, and he preferred to see them with the brother that actually liked seeing it—

His head ached, and only then did he realize that he was particularly fatigued. It felt like every limb of his body had been favored by gravity, pulling him down to the bed. Sleep, it calls, sleep. It was a rather convincing voice, but he wanted to... he wanted...

What did he want again?

Theseus.

He remembered, and he felt dread. Oh gods and primes above,

He'd... he'd been poisoned.

The slam of the door against the wall grabbed his attention from the memories that resurfaced from when he had been awake last. William turned his head to look, the snap of his head dizzying, and he saw his brother, the Prince of Blood, making his way to William with a furious stride. "Are you feeling well, Prince William?" There, the stifling formality despite the clear-as-day adoration that this man held for his brother, ever evident in the way he spoke.

"I am feeling alright, brother." William replied. "Is Theseus alright—?"

Nothing physical had struck him, not even the wind dare hurt William, but the cold, rust-like look on the Prince of Blood's face struck him harder than any blade he had ever encountered before. "Do not speak of that Traitor while you are in recovery," The Imperial Prince said.

"What do you mean—?"

"There was evidence left on the scene, suggesting that he is the one who took your life." He told William, and the way he spoke suggested that he'd wanted William to hold the same hatred as himself. "As a prosecution to treason, he is to be executed at dawn." He said.

And William felt his heart sink to his gut, and flashes of Theseus' smile resurfaced behind his eyes. Everything of Theseus ran in his head, the thought of betrayal almost impossible to think of. No, that child could not ever harm anyone.

And William remembered, in his panic, the way Theseus fell to his knees in fear, fell to tears in his grief, and how he screamed in desperation for anyone to help the brother that had fallen to the poison. He knows for a fact that Theseus could not ever hurt anyone, most of all him.

And William couldn't process the way the Imperial Prince's eyes warmed at the words he said, as if pleased with the events that occurred, or will occur. "You will be safe, brother," nor did he notice the way he finally called him something other than a formality, how he brushed his unruly fringe away from his brow, crystal blue eyes clearer than the day shining, betraying his grief and despair.

"I will make sure of it."

~+~

Tommy spends the week with Clementine . He would say that he'd been cooped up, but he doesn't really dislike it. He likes Clementine, it's been a lot more efficient hiding their gold somewhere with the little raccoon digging holes for him.

And the gold he's lost?

Well the raccoon is the one that took it.

But hey, it should be alright. After all, Tommy *did* agree to have Ranboo eat it when it perishes, which is not anytime soon with how he's been taking care of him. He's the biggest man ever, after all, he won't let his pretty little Clementine perish. He's going to make that wrongun *wait*.

For now, he's going to treat Clementine like his son. He raises the kit like Simba, and covers his view of the sun with him. "Anything the light touches, my son, is yours." He doesn't really... remember the lines, but he's got the spirit!

Clementine, on the other hand(s), seemed to understand the role, and raised his arms as well. Tommy giggles at the sight. He's adorable, what the fuck?

"Prince Tommy?" Tommy blinks, and turns his head away from Clementine. It sounds like...

"Puffy!" He cheers, hugging Clementine and running to Puffy. "Look! I got a pet!" Tommy attempted to raise him to her eye level. She tilts her head so that she sees him, but she couldn't seem to look past the odd creature.

She laughs, hesitating a bit. "That's... nice? Where did you get it?"

"Him. His name is Clementine and I found him in the garden!" Tommy grins, and hugs Clementine. The kit climbs to his shoulders, and curls around his neck.

"He's rather well-behaved."

"Because Clementine is the best!" Tommy said, with pride practically swelling in his chest.

"Does your brother know about him?"

Tommy frowns, and shook his head. "No, why?" Tommy asked.

He'd mulled over it before, actually, and through his lessons he learned that he didn't need to tell the Prince about pets in the palace. There's no law against it, so Tommy is going to exercise his pet-having rights by omitting it from Technoblade forever.

Puffy giggles and takes a knee before the prince. "Alright, now based on what Sam's been telling me, you haven't visited your brother in a while now, hm?" Puffy tilted her head. "I think it's time for a visit." She smiles.

He exchanges a look with the raccoon, "You coming with?" Tommy asked, maybe as moral support or something.

The raccoon titters, and climbs down Tommy to run towards his place under Tommy's bed.

He scowls. "Traitor." He hisses under his breath, and looks back at Puffy with a frown. "Clementine doesn't wanna go." He whines.

"Why not?"

"I don't think Techie'd like him." Tommy pouts.

Puffy blinks at that.

"Techie?"

Tommy grins. Oh yeah, slander on his brother by giving him an annoying nickname. Poggers plan. “Techie! Big brother Technoblade!” Tommy exclaims.

She cups her lips with her hand, and nods her head. She puts it down, grin barely hidden on her face. “Ah, yes of course.” She giggles. “*Techie*.”

Tommy was about to walk out of the room himself, before realizing that there’s no Clara in sight. “Oh wait, do I keep this,” he places a finger on his lips, “as well?” he whispers loudly.

He’s referring to how they meet in secret sometimes in the kitchen, and they’d have talks about how their days go. Tommy would talk about Dream and the things he learns in class and Puffy would talk about the things she sees outside when she leads expeditions.

And the world is magical, Tommy learned, which is cool and all. He doesn’t really take notice of it much, he would when he leaves, but right now his priority is to make the perfect opportunity to run away.

Puffy shakes her head. “No need, I have official business with your brother later.” Puffy says with a smile. “But, keep the rest,” she places a finger on her lips, like Tommy did. Puffy winks, and Tommy giggles.

“Yeah, sure!” Tommy grins.

The lady took Tommy in her arms, and boops him in the nose. “Ah, you’ve grown!” She teases. “One day I won’t be able to carry you anymore!” she exaggerates her despair, placing the back of her palm against her horn.

Tommy gawks, “What do you mean!” Tommy fakes a frown. “When I become taller than you, you’ll still be able to carry me!” He declares. “Cos Puffy is the strongest woman ever!” Tommy raises both his hands to make his point.

Puffy giggles in response.

“Do you require me to join you in escorting the young prince to His Imperial Majesty?” Clara asks, looking at Puffy with reverence. Tommy is full of pride. Of course there’s reverence. She’s wearing her Captain’s uniform. Her medals of valor and honor are on display and free for Tommy to fiddle with.

Puffy shakes her head. “No need, I have an inkling that Sam will be there later.” She says with a grateful smile. She then turns to Tommy, “Alright, little Prince, off we go to your brother.”

His mood dampens, but he still clings to Puffy anyway.

There’s a knock on the door, and the knob glows golden for a flicker before returning to its normal shade. Tommy scoffs internally. He still dislikes that. The pig bastard is basically showing off his powers when he could just open the door or just shout a ‘come in!’. What’s the point of this?

His usual internal monologue mocking Technoblade is instantly cut off by Puffy setting him down to his own feet. Tommy opens the door, again on his tippy toes, and he rushes to the table where Technoblade is working on.

He peeks above the table, looking from across Technoblade, and smiles. “Good morning Techie!” Tommy greets with so much faux enthusiasm that it still makes him sick. Eugh.

Technoblade glances at him briefly, then he looks up at Puffy who is standing at attention. “At ease,” Technoblade says to her, before returning his gaze to his little brother. “So that’s why I heard a knock this time.” He says.

Tommy lets out a little ‘hehe’. “I wanna surprise brother when I come in!” Tommy smiles wide.

“Ah, so you neglect your brother for a week?”

He blinks. Oh, right, in his defense, Clementine was a lot more fun to be with than this pig bastard. He’s such a small delight. “Nah, I was just a little busy for a few days.” Tommy says. “I’m not neglecting you, promise!” Tommy raises a pinky finger at Technoblade, which he takes, and puts back on the surface of the table.

“Busy with what?” Technoblade narrows his eyes.

“Prince Theseus has caught himself a little pet.” Puffy says with a smile. “It’s a majestic little thing, reminds me of the princeling.”

Tommy looks at Puffy with betrayal in his eyes. “I am *not* a pet!” He scoffs, hating the idea.

Technoblade lets out an amused huff, and Tommy looks at him like he’s an alien. What is this? A rare positive reaction solely for the reason of *mocking* him? He hopes his departure makes the palace go insane. He deserves it.

“I don’t recall news of a pet,” Technoblade hums.

And Tommy realizes what this means. Wait, right, he’s *royalty*, and that usually means that they take extra precautions to make sure that he doesn’t die. What if Technoblade kills it out of fear that it has rabies? Or what if it’s disgraceful for princes to have raccoon pets? Oh he is *not* going to cash in that favor from Ranboo this early on—

“Clementine beloved!” Tommy cheers. “His name is Clementine, do you think it’s a pretty name?”

“What animal is it?” Technoblade questions, and it’s not pointed at Tommy. Rather, it’s directed to Puffy who seems to enjoy the ‘brotherly’ interaction between the two.

Puffy grins, “A raccoon, your Imperial Highness.” She answers. “A blond one, though. It looks quite cute.”

Wait, he’s not aware of the reputation of raccoons in the Empire.

Technoblade raises an eyebrow, and Tommy could feel his sweat drop in anticipation. “Fitting.” Is all he says, before he leans back on his chair. There’s a less stoic expression on his face. This evidently confuses Tommy: is there an inside joke or something? “Now, Theseus, what brings you here?” Technoblade asks.

That’s Techno-Talk for ‘ *Hey Tommy! What do you wanna do today ?*’

And before Puffy could say anything, there’s another voice in the room.

“It’s a rather nice day outside, don’t you think?” It’s Sam, and he’s right at the door that he didn’t even realize had opened.

Tommy turns to greet Sam, who appeared at the scene just as Puffy had suspected. “Hello Awesam!” Tommy greets from where he’s standing. It’s been two years since he’s *suspected* Sam of being a horse-killer, but he’s still not having that mess of a person hang around him until he’s sure that he’s less murderous and hazardous to his courtiers. Gods and Primes know that they’re likely out to get him.

(Unbeknownst to him, Tommy is practically worshiped by the servants of the Sapphire palace)

His older brother stands, “That’s an adequate idea.” Technoblade says, and he heads towards the door without as much as a pause for Tommy to catch up. Typical,

But now Tommy could hitch a ride, so easily he reaches for Puffy, to bring him up to be carried,

Only for Technoblade to carry him before Puffy could even lean down to lift.

He could only blink, in a bit of a whiplash from the sudden action, but he’s over all unharmed. Tommy looks at Puffy, and she seems to have a playful grin on her face. What the fuck? Just a second ago the man was about to pass through the gaudy doors. How did he get here that fast?

They’re already in motion towards the outdoor garden when his brother speaks. “You should really learn to rely on yourself, Theseus.” Technoblade comments. “People would think that you’d be easy to pick on if you’ve set the reputation of being carried all the time.”

Tommy could sense that he’s got a nerve about to pop through his head. He’s *six years old* . He’s a kid! Expected to follow long strides by long fucking legs.

“Well if you don’t wanna carry me, I think Puffy would be glad to.” Tommy retorts, adding a little bite to his tone.

Technoblade eyes Tommy, and Tommy defiantly stares back.

He wins, of course, because Technoblade is the first to look away.

Puffy, following behind and beside Sam who is doing fuck knows what, snickers, before adding in a sweet voice: “If your arms are tired, Your Imperial Highness, then maybe I can—”

“Twenty steps behind, *Cara* .” Technoblade says, and she takes twenty steps further from where she was originally walking from. There’s a mischievous grin on her face.

Tommy squints his eyes at her. What is she *doing* ? Does she want to kill him?

That seems to be the fucking case!

The four of them walk to the garden, likely to the table where he and Technoblade frequent when he’s not in the mood to slide children’s necks with sickles.

Tommy leans his head to Technoblade’s shoulder, feeling a bit tired of keeping his back straight despite being carried. It’s like his back is a bit achy. He needs to exercise more, he reckons.

Technoblade shifts Tommy a bit so that the kid is in a more comfortable position. “Are you tired, Theseus?” Technoblade asks,

And Tommy shakes his head. He can’t be tired. He has a quota of his exposure therapy to fill. “Mno.” Tommy mumbles.

He doesn’t say anything about it.

He’s placed on his seat, and the table is prepared in front of him, but he doesn’t really… find an appetite. That’s odd. He could have sworn he was watering at the mouth at the idea of having sweets.

“Who’d you like better when it comes to carrying you, Tommy?” Puffy asked, clearly stoking the fires. He should say Technoblade yes, but there’s something a lot more funny perhaps, if he’s gauging his relationship with Technoblade right.

Technoblade looks at Tommy expectantly,

And with a look like *that* he’s just *begging* for chaos.

“Sammy!” Tommy cheers.

Puffy and Technoblade freeze, exchange a look, and stare at Sam with a rather frightening combination of expressions.

Before either of them say anything, Sam raises a hand, and with defeat he asks: “How many steps away?”

“By the lake would be nice.” Technoblade hums, before he turns back to the tea set and mixes the tea the way he likes.

Tommy doesn't... pay attention. Normally he should, but he's finding it a bit hard to focus a bit.

Tommy swings his legs, but he feels so much fatigue in his body. It's familiar, he thinks, staring mindlessly at the tea cup in his hands. It's big, he realizes, big enough that he needs two hands to hold it properly.

"Theseus, is the tea not to your taste?" Technoblade asks,

And normally, Tommy would be in panic, say something about ' *how could I dislike it, I haven't tasted it* ' followed by a giggle and an exaggerated sip. He'd refute, saying that he loves the tea, or maybe he'd ask for more sugar, or perhaps even change the topic into something more childish when he actually does dislike the tea. Except now, there's no fumbling, no panicking, and no defending. He doesn't even notice the tea anymore.

He feels weak, he notices. He makes sure to place the tea on its respective saucer,

Something's... something's terribly wrong. He doesn't know what exactly it is, but it's off.

Tommy looks up at Technoblade, and for once he doesn't know what expression he has on his face. It's uncontrolled, he knows, but he doesn't feel... strong enough to change it. Not when something else so overwhelming seems to be happening to his body.

He recognizes the feeling now, actually. The familiar pain, the type that lingers.

It's a sword. A stabbing pain. One so familiar that he doesn't know how he could have ever forgotten it. A sensation of excruciating pain that goes through parts of his body he hasn't actively felt before. Even worse, he *recognizes* the sword. It's a blunt one, overused, and terribly painful. It doesn't *cut* , it *tears* .

He grasps at his own chest, seeing if anything had penetrated through his thorax, but nothing, not an injury, not even the sticky feeling of blood.

Following that familiar feeling is the sensation of drowning. Tommy doesn't know how, actually, but he's drowning.

He tastes something metallic on his tongue. It fills his mouth, and the taste is repulsive.

It dribbles past his lips.

In what shame he has left, he tries to catch it, but it overflows even his own hands, and the liquid slips past his grasp.

Oh, he realizes, now looking at his hands, feeling what he was expecting just a moment earlier.

Tommy's eyes widen at the realization of what's happening.

It's blood.

Tommy looks up at Technoblade. In the back of his head, he wonders if Technoblade has poisoned him. Had he... had he wanted to kill Tommy? Was he mean? Wasn't he enough?

Somehow the ache is... is worse now, with those thoughts. He expected this, right? He... he knew this would always happen, that one day, if he isn't smart, or quick, or charming, he'd die. Why is it that the thought of it hurt more than the fact that he was drowning in scarlet?

Tommy couldn't hear anything, but the sight is the last to go. He lets it sink in, accepting that maybe his killer would be the last thing he sees. He sees bright red eyes, but more of it is revealed than usual—oh, his eyes are wide. His lips are gapped, as if he had let out a gasp, or something like a 'huh'. His stature is rigid. Over all, Tommy sees, that there is a genuine expression of shock.

How ironic. He'd succeeded at his fate without even meaning to.

He's weak, he realizes, and he's falling.

His sight fades eventually. The last thing Tommy sees is the running figure of Puffy, Technoblade, and a very far away Sam reaching out to him. Technoblade's hand is the closest to him.

And the last thing he feels is betrayal.

He was expecting this.

So why did it hurt?

~+~

“You call this helping?” There's a frightening echo in his voice as he speaks, one that's particularly dangerous.

“Y-Your Imperial Majesty,” The stranger begs, and there’s a familiar fear in his voice that quivers in each word he speaks. *“Please understand–”*

Tommy couldn’t understand whatever else was being said, because all of a sudden the pain resurfaced stabbing through his lungs. He could practically feel the way his lungs were being shrunk, disturbed from where it’s naturally positioned. “H-Help me,” Tommy cries out, trying to gasp out a plea.

There’s nothing that Tommy could hear, and nothing else that he could feel save for the stabbing pain in his heart. “P-Please,” He cries, trying to reach his wound, trying to cover the injury, lest he bleeds out.

Tommy couldn’t feel the hand that covers his head. He couldn’t see it through the tears that seem to endlessly flow from his eyes. “I-It hurts, n-no more,” He begs. Maybe if he’s good enough it’d stop. Maybe if he was better, someone would help him.

“I-I’ll be,” *I’ll be good*, he tries to say. *I’ll be good, obedient*, “I’ll– Please, n-no more.” He sobs, curling into himself.

There’s not one good position. All of it hurts.

And it keeps on stabbing.

The pain keeps on stabbing, repeatedly.

There’s a moment of relief, though, for just the briefest moment he could feel nothing but the hand on his scalp.

He opens his eyes just enough to see something, and he sees a figure looming by his bedside, a hand in his hair. Behind him was another person.

“You hurt him.”

“P-Please understand,”

“It’s like you’re begging me for Tenfold what Theseus is suffering through.”

“Your majesty, this is... this has been happening since earlier, he only got to respond this way because he’d woken up–”

He was cut off.

“Every word you spit from that useless mouth that does not solve this, is another inch off your fingers that I chop off. Do you understand?”

Tommy is afraid.

He... He hasn’t said anything. He’s been good. He hasn’t done anything to be punished.

Tommy holds the hand that holds his head. He looks up, and sees glowing red. In a haze, he mutters: “P-Please don’t-” He starts, but the hand moves, combing through the scalp in the most soothing way he has ever felt since he’d woken up.

“*Sleep, Theseus.*” The voice says.

And surprisingly, he’s able to.

~+~

A hand in his hair. *Calloused fingers caressing his head, but it’s cooler than the warm temperature of his head. It’s gentle, and cold, but it’s all he needed.*

Everywhere hurts, and everywhere burns, aches, and stabs, but it’s tolerable because of the hope lying in that one hand.

There’s bandages, he feels it wrapped around his chest, his leg, his arms, and there is ointment on his burns but he can’t bring himself to care.

All for the gentle, caring, and loving hand.

He’d hoped it’d never leave his skin.

~+~

The next he wakes up, he’s in tears. “*It’s the mana, your highness.*” The person explains as clear as they can. “*The mana in his body is far too much for how young he is.*”

“*And you have nothing to solve this?*”

“*I-I-*”

A beat of silence.

“*Send him to the dungeons.*” The more intimidating voice says, and all that follows are cries, pleading the man not to send him to his demise.

Tommy hears it, but he can’t find a way to speak. He can reach out, though, and he feels a cloth that is silkier than the blanket that he’s covered with. He tugs, tries to find attention from the

It hurts.

It hurts.

“You should sleep.”

It hurts .

But it stops when he does.

~+~

He’s loved. He’s loved. He’s loved. He’s loved. He’s loved.

Why did it stop?

Chapter End Notes

again, rushed, unbeta'ed, and CUT.

but also this is only half the outline I had for the chapter, so now I had to split that into two LMAOO I had an entire plan worked out but then I thought "well I should sprinkle a bit of crack here and there, some fluff maybe, some happy vibes," and I accidentally spilt the whole bottle.

Unreliable narrator pog <3 I hope you all are as frustrated as me, wondering what's going on (meanwhile I'm frustrated over the fact that there are so much in the story I can't reveal yet until I enact different events in Tommy's life)

fun fact: people who meet puffy instantly see her as either a sisterly/parental figure, and technoblade is fully aware of this reputation of hers and won't admit that he doesn't want Tommy falling for it.

A ship with new oak is no different unless there's a miracle riding along

Chapter Notes

ik i sorta promised to update stay by my side my brother, but i also technically won a bet so im updating this chapter lol

i hope yall enjoy, it's sorta rushed and I also frankenstein's monstered a bunch of plot things and layoutted it in a dream manner. Enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy is not awake when he sees the children , both with blue eyes, strumming string instruments of their own. One held a guitar crafted so intricately, and the other held a violin that looked well-loved. Tommy doesn't recognize either of them.

From a distance he sees what he assumes are their parents. They sit next to each other on a loveseat, where the man with blond hair supports a woman with brown hair as she leans towards him. She looks happy, and content. Especially content.

Tommy observes the scenery, not failing to notice the beautiful song that the two children strum and strung along their instruments. It's beautiful, he thinks. Especially with the sun setting seen in the window and the sky turned pink and orange.

He observes the couple, and there's an unfamiliar longing for them despite them being unfamiliar to him. He doesn't understand the inherent need, but he indulges in it anyway.

The man is blond with straight hair just barely touching his shoulders. There's a deformity in his hair, similar to when one's hair has been tied for a whole day and suddenly you remove its ribbon. His eyes are as blue as the children's, matching with the peculiar but familiar glimmer in his eyes. His collar is loosened, and a cape that seemed to match his outfit is laid on the arm of the large seat.

Behind him is a shadow that seemed too large and too round for his frame. Two large peaks of shadow that do not match his silhouette could be seen, and Tommy couldn't make sense of it.

The woman leaning against him has her eyes closed, but the smile on her face is evident. Her hair cascaded down her shoulders and onto her lap, brown curtains a mess but still beautiful regardless. Her smile is soft, as are her features. A locket that seemed out of place lies on top of her chest, and if Tommy looked closer he would have noticed how it glowed unnaturally. Beside the couple are crowns resting above one another, removed from the head where it sat.

And behind her is no shadow at all.

And the kids, both looking similar to one another yet there's a vague difference that is noticeable but can't be placed, play their instruments like their fingers dance over tightropes. It's graceful, every swing and every strum. The one with the guitar sits gracefully on a chair, and the one with the violin stands like the very floors of the room owe him praise.

It's a peculiar sight, rather surreal.

Tommy can't help but long for it. To be a part of it.

It doesn't matter that he doesn't know these people.

He wants.

The woman opens her eyes, and Tommy could swear that she's looking directly at him. That soft and fond expression that she had extended to him, and there's a swelling of something terribly like hope in Tommy's chest. She raised one free palm out, as if she were asking for his hand. Tommy wants to take it, but she's so far away.

She smiles, so warm and welcoming— "Stay?" The woman asks, and he's inclined to accept the offer. To be a part of something like this must be so wonderful.

Then as if realizing, her smile falls just a bit, and her palm lowers a little bit. There's a heartbroken look on her face, as if she realized something. The feeling in Tommy's chest sinks, wondering what he did wrong.

And the room fades into darkness, starting from the corners of his vision. The last thing Tommy sees are darkened, violet eyes with a glimmer that seemed familiar to him.

~+~

Not yet, Theseus . A voice lingers but is easily forgotten when the sensations overwhelm his capability to retain memory. He feels warm, something soft and just a bit weighted is resting over his body. There's something soft behind his head, and it feels comfortable. Tommy should be used to this, he's been living like this for the past years of this life, surely something like this shouldn't take long to get used to and to look over.

But he likes it. He likes the comfort of having a mattress behind his back with clean linen, and layers upon layers of blankets on his body where he doesn't have to bend in to fit. He likes the pillows, how they aren't just satchels with cloth stuffed inside it to make it at least easier to sleep on. He likes the bed, how he won't have to sit up.

And maybe there's a furnace, perhaps that's why he doesn't feel the need for socks, why his feet don't feel like separating itself piece by piece from his small body.

There's a hand on his head.

He likes it.

~+~

Come home, Theseus . He had brothers once. Maybe not by blood, and maybe he would never call them his brothers to their faces, but he had them once. In all honesty, he doesn't know how or when he lost them. He just does.

And despite the fact that it happened so frequently, it never seems to hurt any less.

He's no stranger to loss, or betrayal. He's familiar with it, but that doesn't make it hurt any less.

Especially longing. Longing is as familiar to him as his own hands, but as weak as he is, that doesn't make it hurt any less.

And death. Oh is he so familiar with it. His friend, the only one that seemed to cling by his side in his life. There hasn't been a drastic moment in his life where death hadn't been the perpetrator. He is familiar with it, but that doesn't make it hurt any *fucking* less.

He remembers. It's him and his family against the world. His family, so strange and so unlike from one another that it's almost shocking how they all managed to love each other so much. (not that it had been much, if it was so great then maybe they would have stayed with him).

Memories linger in the back of his head, begging to be forgotten, but Tommy clings to it in hopes that he could return to those somehow. That they'd forgive him. He still hopes. Maybe if this was it, maybe he could go home.

The calloused hands wrapping thin cloth around open injuries that start to bruise. Filed down talons so preciously maintained just so it could run through his scalp without as much as a scratch on it. Hands of a brute so gently cupping his cheeks, keeping him together.

And a mother of the skies, looking at him like he's everything in the world.

He wraps his greedy hands around the thought with a smile. He amuses himself with fickle ideations of these memories, testing its waters to see what it makes him feel, to see if it's still scalding or freezing. Whichever it is, he welcomes the sensation and embraces it.

What vague little memories of it he has left.

Was he loved?

He can't help but wonder.

Is Tommy lovable at all?

"*Theseus...*" That name. He keeps hearing it. The name is the only thing he hears, and the rest were muffled words that resembled a man speaking to him while he drowns. It's an unwelcome voice, but one he inevitably longs for regardless.

And soon after, a clearer, younger voice follows.

"*I can help, your highness.*" A familiar voice rings in his ears.

~+~

That's not his name . He never liked being called Theseus. It's odd. Tommy, Theseus, at this point he should have gotten used to having both identities, merge them because it's pertaining to one single person. He should like that, having many names means that many people know him well enough to name him differently. He's liked it, after all, having nicknames and names that people would speak of, and when they speak of it they'd *know* it was him. Tommy loves the idea of that.

But he cannot handle the idea of letting go of the separation of it. He's not Theseus. He's Tommy. Theseus had died, unloved by all but one. Theseus is with the mother whose life he's taken, where no one could express their hatred for him anymore.

And Tommy isn't Theseus, but still the same.

Unloved.

But with the guise of this new person, why does he so easily woo the hearts of people? He's not an idiot. He's not *stupid* to be blind to how easy it is to change them. It's a lot. It's odd, how the amalgamation of two unloved, hated children becomes well liked enough to twist people around his pinky. It's unnatural.

How drastic were the changes Tommy made? In his eyes, he's done so little. He's grown up with personality, one that no one in this time had developed in him. He grew up with the wit of a 16 year old, and only then did they *start* to see him as *something* .

He hates these people for being so fickle.

But he selfishly loves it.

He loves being loved. He loves being cherished, having power in a sense that they only wish for him to be as happy as he could. He loves how they love *him*.

But by the end of the day, it wasn't Tommy that made them love him. It wasn't Theseus that made them love him. It was a fucking *miracle* that made them bend backwards to love him, and anything short of it would have sent him falling down like Icarus with a head on a pike and a body as soil.

He is on no high horse to be unaware.

And it's fickle. It's terribly fickle, how one moment he could feel so loved and another he would be betrayed.

All the reason why Tommy doesn't like Theseus. It's why he's *Tommy*. His name, once pertaining to a child people had given up on, is now the name people have become endeared with.

And it had gotten into his head, and he'd experienced betrayal yet again.

He can't help but wonder if he'd really changed anything at all.

Tommy or Theseus, either way he doesn't know if anything had changed for either unfortunate child.

After all, it's an arbitrary and *fucked up* world where one mistake could land his head to the ground.

"Theseus, wake up." The call slips uselessly from one ear out the other. Why should he? He's safer here.

He doesn't want to go anymore. It's so tiring. He doesn't want to have to fight this damned world anymore. Why does he always fight?

~+~

There's another scenario before him, but the sun doesn't cast pink rays on the clouds anymore . No, on the contrary, the sun bleeds red past the windows , cascading darker and more sinister shadows on the cast of the scene.

Tommy sees mutilated bodies, all wearing copious jewelry stained with blood. Tommy is no stranger to the gore, but it's jarring to see such a familiar place be draped in blood just as the corpses' necks had been draped in gold and gems.

In the middle of it all is a monster, one that looked so human in form but horrifying in nature, one that would have been Tommy's age if he hadn't gone to this world, heaving and slouched

over what could be assumed was the last to survive and the last to be killed. His hair is darker than what Tommy knows, however, dark as the blood that flow down his victims' necks are the locks of hair that flow from his head.

He looks up, looking past Tommy, and the familiar face stares with an incomprehensible melancholy. His eyes were familiar, even more so than the sapphire blues Tommy recalls. If he looks closer, then he might notice the ruby eyes watering, presenting a vulnerability he'd never thought he'd ever see on that face.

Tommy turned to see what it was that made him so,

Only to find a portrait of two boys, the ones he'd seen in an earlier dream. The canvas had been vandalized with blood soaking into one of the portraits, and torn in the middle where their hands would have met.

Tommy feels an ache in his chest for these unfamiliar children.

But that doesn't do anything for the fact that Tommy is reminded of what this ruby-eyed man will do to him. He is reminded of blood, how much of it shall be spilled.

He is reminded of the sword the man in the scenario is holding, how one day, it'd be his neck that it would caress.

He's reminded of the timer on his head, one that ticks faster with every wrong move he makes.

Most frightening of all, he's reminded as he looks into those broken, red orbs, that he too is human.

He's just as human as Tommy.

There is a hand on his head. He takes note of how big they are, almost as large as Tommy's head. The palms are rough, and from the distal portions of his mind he knows that it's from the swords he's so adept at using. There are calluses at the joints, and somewhere in the back of his mind he's reminded of how many words have flown out of those fingers. Tommy doesn't dare move lest he offends it. He doesn't mind whatever it could result in. Be it anguish, for a mere lift of fingers could break Tommy apart, or pain, because these hands aren't innocent with the blood it might have rubbed into Tommy's skin.

But it is all the same *agony* as Tommy realizes that there is no longer a hand on his head, brushing his hair off of his eyebrows.

He opens his eyes, briefly, trying to wake up.

He's met with a familiar scenario, but all so different regardless.

There is a boy before him, with old-rose hair cascading down his shoulders down his torso. It's a mess, Tommy notes lightly. He's a mess, he notes while he looks at the familiar look in his eyes. A specific kind of melancholy. A vulnerable beast is what Tommy sees.

Distantly, there's an ache in his body. He doesn't care much for it. He's gone through worse.

Right now the disbelief makes everything else bleak. Is this the look of a man close to success? Tommy doesn't want to think about it. The heavy feeling in his chest is driving him insane, overpowering even the throbbing sensation of a visceral wound that isn't physically there.

His head hurts, his throat feels like it's clogged and the back of his eyes feel like it's burning. Everything he's feeling just heightens the frustration built up in him. He sobs, staring at this man. He'd dropped all pretenses of shame and cried.

He's angry. He's hurt. He's so goddamn *pissed* at this world for giving him this shit hand of cards and telling him he might win blindfolded against a man who has mirrors reflecting his hand.

Bastard, is what he wants to say, *if you wanted to kill me then you'd better be fucking happy you succeeded*. Tommy thinks desperately, but all he sees is that stupid fucking look on his face.

Is this why he's upset? He'd failed? Failed to kill his brother, poison him and repeatedly endanger his life? Is he tired, because Tommy keeps on living?

If he weren't so soppy and sad right now, he just might succeed at his fate. The pig bastard could land a hand at Tommy's throat and no one would be stupid enough to blame the death of the third prince on him. No one would tattle, saying that it wasn't the poison that got him, saying that it was a hand that ended his life, saying that the hand that fed is the hand that kills.

You're supposed to be cruel, Tommy thinks of how easier it would have been to have been ignored, of how easy it would be for Tommy to run away and relish in the thought of no one caring. *You're supposed to be cruel*. He repeats in his head, because the idea of making him less human would have made everything so much easier, because at least Tommy wouldn't have to expect kindness from a cruel man.

But he has that *stupid* fucking *lonesome* look on his face that Tommy feels nothing but hatred for.

Why does he have that look on his face?

Why?

Tommy might have wailed, or screamed, but he knows for a fact that not a word of his frustrations slipped out of his lips.

If you want to fucking murder me, own up to it you pig bastard. He wants to hiss at him, claw at that stupid fucking face, but there's nothing he could do when the stare keeps him still. Not out of fear. Not out of whatever magical bullshit there is in this universe.

He has no idea what's keeping him from hurting this man before him. Self-preservation, maybe, because no vulnerability could make this man's capabilities stoop so low into Tommy's levels. Maybe it's his lack of will, knowing that there has always been a chance that he'd die no matter how much he says he wants to live.

I hate you . Tommy thinks,

Tommy stretches out a hand towards him. There's a certain desperation in his actions, more raw than any act that he's ever done before. He wonders briefly if this any act at all.

Then again, he's rather delirious, isn't he?

Maybe that explanation would suffice.

The man, who he knows had such a stoic expression, looked at Tommy like he was looking at something he lost.

A part of Tommy wants to scream that he's wrong.

Another wants to say that it's been a long time coming.

The man takes Tommy's hand in his own larger ones. He places it at Tommy's side but he doesn't let go of him. His other hand returns to his head, brushing away stray curls that loved to tickle at his eyes. His head tilted downwards, and both his hands still. The weight gradually slows down his breathing, calming it down just enough so he could sleep with ease.

Finally, he musters something that he's able to say. One word, with a lilt in the end. The most genuine bout of his childishness that even he doubts that it's an act anymore.

"Stay?"

And Technoblade mutters something incomprehensible, and Tommy would assume it was of an ancient language if it weren't for the fact that he was aware his verbal comprehension was shit.

His words. Tommy almost mistakes it as a prayer.

The stillness and the warmth lulls him to sleep.

“...*Tommy?*” His eyes flutter open, and the air feels foreign in his chest. He looks to his side, and he sees a jarring sight of an annoyingly tall person.

Tommy closes his eyes again.

“Hey,” He could hear the irritation in his voice while he calls for Tommy. “I literally saw you awake a moment ago!” He sounds exasperated as he speaks.

Tommy doesn’t move.

“Your dad is *literally* going to try to behead me if you’re not awake by the next ten minutes.” Ranboo begs, and Tommy doesn’t give him the satisfaction of moving.

Wait,

Dad?

Oh fuck no.

Tommy sits up abruptly, and he nearly headbutts the tall mage. “He is *not* my dad.” Tommy screeches, and he narrowly misses the slap he was going to give the giant.

Ranboo blinked. “Oh, so Your Imperial Majesty isn’t Phil, gotcha, noted.” Ranboo says. “Anyway, you’re up now so I-”

Tommy held Ranboo back from standing up. “What happened?” He demands.

“Well,” There’s a ridiculous thinking-face displayed on that large head. “First of all, you nearly died but you’re alive thanks to me.”

He frowns. “Oh, fuck you by the way.”

“Your life *literally* got saved by me-!”

“You haven’t eaten Clementine have you? Otherwise I’m going to pretend like you’re on your way to murdering me.”

“What-”

Tommy prepares some tears. He’s tearing up. He’s about to cause some public execution today.

“I haven’t eaten your pet!”

“Oh, nice.” He wipes away the welling tears, a small smile on his lips while Ranboo rambles about how frightening his older brother is.

The smile falls. His older brother. When did he... when did he start thinking like that? His *older brother*. He shudders, wrapping his arms around himself when he remembers scenes. It's different reading it, and it's different *witnessing* it.

He reaches to his neck, and his limbs feel cold with the realization.

"...Tommy?" Ranboo asks, and despite Tommy's crass personality clashing against Ranboo's he seems the least bit concerned over him.

"What... What happened that put me here?" Tommy asked, wondering why he's still alive. There's a dreadful silence in his hesitation to ask. There's a question in there, one he doesn't want the answer to if... if it was something painful.

Ranboo frowns, and he leans against the seat. "It's your pet. Your body is reacting horribly to it, mana hijinks and all." He answers. "You know how making glass works?"

Tommy nods, not that he really cares for the answer. He's got it.

"Well, your body is a glass vase in the making, growing and preparing to hold large bouts of cold water from the South." Ranboo raised a hand, and a visual of a glassblower and a glass being grown. "But just because that's what you're made for doesn't mean that it won't break you—" He shows the glassblower dipping the molten, molded, and searing glass into a bucket of ice cold water.

It explodes, and the imagery disappears into mist.

"That's what Clementine is. Your little bucket of water that you only indulge in *after* you're done being molded." Ranboo recreates the imagery of the broken vase.

Tommy looks at it, and he knows he should be scared but there's something else that's more jarring than the fact that he could have exploded like hot glass in cold water. He looks at it, and there's less fear and more... *relief*.

"You don't look scared."

Tommy doesn't respond.

"I'm just saying, none of this would have happened if you just let me eat that damn raccoon." Ranboo muttered under his breath, to which Tommy responds with a slap on Ranboo's arm. "OW! Primes, you act like you haven't been sleeping for like, more than probably a week now." He rubs his arm as if to soothe his arm.

A week. That's... that's a lot. The physically younger boy rolls his eyes. If he could eat a raccoon he could handle a fucking slap on the arm.

"No, really though, if you let me eat it you won't be dying anytime soon."

"Eat my dick."

"Why would you say that!?"

Tommy was ready to retort with the worst word he knows, but he was cut off by the sound of the door knob rattling—Prime even the rattling of the door is rich sounding here.

The doors open, both Ranboo and Tommy turn their heads to see one man enter the room. He's tall, his hair loose from its usual braid and he dons a white, loose, ruffled blouse. His presence isn't deceitful of his sheer size, and he realizes just how large this man is.

And if Tommy had been none the wiser, maybe he would have immediately cowered. Or maybe he would have dropped dead and acted like he'd gotten another seizure.

No, he doesn't do any of it.

Instead, he slips off his bed, onto his feet, and *runs* .

One would assume that he'd be off to run away. Run around the bed, hide behind a bed post.

Fuck that.

Fuck.

Tommy runs towards Technoblade, preparing to launch himself at him. He takes one step forward, and he begins wondering if this is the right decision. Another step and he's thinking if what he's feeling is real. Another, and a new doubt blooms. And he takes another, and another, until Tommy is midway through the distance between himself and his older brother.

He runs,

But the stupid fucking carpet, as always, ruins it.

Next thing he knows, the floor is growing taller and the sky is running further,

But he doesn't meet the floor, he's caught by sturdy and calloused hands. Tommy looks up, and he sees a look of concern break through the stoic facade of that pig bastard. "*Theseus*, are you okay?" He swipes the messy blond curls from Tommy's face, and it's so gentle and so unlike what he always expects from him that it reminds him of something.

He nods absentmindedly, letting the sight, the scenario, sink into his head as it is.

But it sinks in, finally, and upon the realization that he's witnessing yet another form of vulnerability, felt his calculative heart crack with hope. He hates this. He hates it so much, that he's hoping. He clings to it, even more so than memories of a life that abandoned him. "Brother," And maybe that's the first time he'd genuinely called him that. He starts to cry, face breaking into a frown, then tears break from his lacrimal glands and suddenly he's sobbing again.

Human, Tommy reminds himself, heart throbbing with an understanding and a hope. *Human* , Tommy almost begs to the skies.

Chapter End Notes

this is the part where I start to deviate A Considerable Amount from the original piece.

again, rushed, not betaread, will prolly regret posting this when I wake up and reread it
wheeze

I'll tell yall if there are any changes in case im dissatisfied

I'd hoped you were static

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The Blood Prince is unchanging, perhaps that is the most frightening thing about his affection for William. He isn't soft, he isn't loving, but one should understand that the difference between cruel and indifferent is surprisingly different from one another. He is cruel for William, and he is cruel for his kingdom, but Technoblade, in William's understanding, is far from indifferent.

And that is the most frightening, how one could care so much to so proudly claim the title of a tyrant.

-Excerpt from the Prince of Song

Tommy can't help but remember that specific, out of place paragraph from the book. Words like these would be inserted in between the political turmoil of the novel, which is why Tommy thought that the book was cheesy despite all the world and political building that the book had. Small bits of William's thoughts would seep through the words and Tommy would think that the weird sneak of poetry in between the more solid and factual parts of the book was corny, out of place, dare he say. That was his prime complaint about the book. William is the round character, and the round character's thinking is so desperately wishing that the static character, the Blood Prince, is round too. Tommy found that annoying and unnecessary in the book. He hated wishful thinking.

But being faced with Technoblade for the past few days now that he's awake? It's jarring, but also familiar in a sense. It's as if the book had already warned him about everything that is Technoblade, and only now came the bits that William would monologue about.

"Hey, Theseus," Technoblade calls, and Tommy raises his head from the crook of Technoblade's shoulder. He looks up at his older brother with puffy eyes.

The sight must have been fucking *hilarious* for Technoblade because he let out a poorly disguised laugh covered by a cough.

"Are you feelin' okay, kid?" He asks, wiping the kid's fringe from his face. It sticks disgustingly to his forehead in what Tommy assumes is sweat. He feels himself cringe— he is a sweaty kid? That's going to be problematic, especially since that would immediately decrease from his 'cute' factor.

Tommy nods.

Something about being so preciously held in the arms of his brother makes his heart flutter with something. He dreads to admit it, but he *wants* it. And the fact that Technoblade is so willing to give this to him makes Tommy recall all the out of place mellowness that Technoblade would have in the novel. He somehow understands what Wilbur meant

Then, now just remembering the *other* people in the room, Tommy grabs both of Technoblade's shoulders. "Brother!" Tommy exclaims in alarm. "There's this strange man in the room and he was sitting right—" When Tommy was about to point at where Ranboo, the tall fuck, was seated, he's stunned to see a kid his age with dual colored hair and heterochromatic eyes. He is also *significantly* shorter than before, and now looking a lot more vulnerable and weak compared to before.

He coughs, the strong string of coughs seemingly wracking his entire body.

"What—?" Tommy blinks at the sight of the now mellow looking child.

He looks up at Technoblade with wide and somehow *sparkling* eyes. "I am so glad that you're feeling better, Your Highness the Prince." Ranboo bows, and Tommy can't imagine what expression is on his face right now because of the horror? Disgust? Second hand shame? That he feels for Ranboo who is posing as a kid.

"Healing the Prince has," he takes in a huge gulp of air as if just *speaking* was tiring him, "has been taxing, your Imperial Highness." Ranboo says with a weak smile. "If you would allow me, may I perhaps just... just rest a little under your hospitality, Your Imperial Highness?" His eyes are *sparkling*. What the fuck?

Technoblade nods, and Tommy feels slightly relieved that the man wouldn't fall for just any cheap imitation of his puppy eyes. Otherwise he'd be insulted. "Just outside, there's a man named Sam. You can ask him for residence within palace grounds." Technoblade says formally, lacking any and all adoration that he'd have *sometimes* with Tommy. Yeah, *his* puppy eyes were better, Ranboob. Fucking copycat. "You deserve to be rewarded for your work and your loyalty to the Empire. You may ask for an audience from me at any opportunity for anything you so desire."

Tommy looks at Technoblade with betrayal.

Where the fuck was this generosity with him? He's cuter and a shit ton more helpful! (lie, he hasn't had any contribution to royal duties yet at his young age.) He feels like he's losing favor! This sucks ass.

He glares at Ranboo who looks up at Tommy with a smug expression.

Tommy clings to Technoblade's neck, possessive of his seat as Technoblade's favorite. Ranboo seemed to be interested in stealing it. Fuck him, he isn't going to make it easy. Alright. *Okay*. Looks like there'd be a menace permanently residing in his home. He's not going to make things easy for him.

“You have to eat properly, Theseus.” Technoblade crosses his arms strictly. Normally Tommy would be outright pissing his pants at the thought of mildly displeasing Technoblade, but now Tommy himself is pissed because he is getting sick of being babied and he is getting sick of all the baby food he is being fed.

He is being fed soup. Soup with entire chunks of *brussel sprouts* in it. Normally he wouldn't complain, but he's been having bland food for *days* now and Technoblade had ordered the multiple royal chefs not to give anything that's too harsh on Tommy's stomach.

But honestly Tommy's stomach can handle anything. He had literally narrowly avoided death, let him eat something *fun* at least!

“I want to eat meat.” Tommy pouts, playing with the chunks of floating pissy vegetables on the soup using his spoon. The plan is to get it cold soon so that the chef could make something a lot more appetizing.

“Meat is too tough.”

“Cream of mushroom?”

“Do you want to die on the toilet?”

“Anything with cheese?”

“Again, death by toilet, are you interested?”

Tommy pouts again. He's an old guy, yes, he's aware, but no age could remove his distaste for fucking *brussel sprouts*. Not to mention it's in the soup of all things. Translucent soup with no *meat* in it.

For just a little, just a *tiny* bit, Tommy thinks that maybe dying while he was comatosed would have been a mercy.

He slaps that idea out of his mind because he's not going to die to a sword and he is *definitely* not going to die because of weird magic allergy or some shit. Fuck that. He isn't a pussy.

But he also isn't going to eat that disgusting excuse of a meal without a fight.

“Can I have dessert after?” Tommy asks.

“Fresh strawberries,” Technoblade answers.

“Dipped in chocolates?” Tommy bargains.

“You'd be too hyper and you could barely even walk.” Technoblade says. “We don't even know where all the sugar would go now that your muscles have gone.” He pokes lightly at Tommy's leg.

Tommy leans back against his seat, and Technoblade doesn't react at all. Why is he so relentless? It's honestly quite annoying. Why can't he just, you know, leave Tommy be? Like

in the original?

He blinks, realizing the oddness of his situation.

How did it turn to this? He could remember clearly back then when he'd solidly would do everything to get Technoblade's favor, but for the past years he'd find that Technoblade had not only been tolerating Tommy for gradually more annoying things but also that Technoblade had done more than just threat him with violence sometimes (at that point, Tommy wonders if Technoblade ever outright had). The indifference from before had somehow turned into... whatever they have now.

And not to mention Tommy had somehow gone from mindlessly (not really, he has a very snarky mind) agreeing with every whim of Technoblade, to even taunting him.

This certainly isn't the only time Tommy's wondered about this, really. Countless times before he'd questioned Technoblade's character, how sometimes the pig bastard would surprise him with what should seem like the most simple thing but is actually quite jarring when you know him as the Prince of Blood from the book, Prince of Song.

He was a flat, static character. Unchanging. Stoic. The only dynamic he'd ever had or change that he'd ever done was in the unreliable narration of William, so blatantly out of context that every reader should recognize that any 'care' Technoblade displays is the hopeful delusions of William who is looking so desperately for a brother in Techno.

Meanwhile, Tommy, having *known* with certainty that Technoblade would be unchanging forever, had come in with the lenses only expecting cruelty from Technoblade,

And time and time again Tommy would get those glasses ripped from his face, and he'd start questioning the colors he was seeing.

"So, will you be eatin' your meal, Theseus?" Technoblade asks, pulling him away from his stupor.

He looks up at Technoblade, and somehow Tommy feels this *satisfaction* of seeing something so drastically different from the sickening melancholy he'd witnessed in a dream, knowing without a doubt that it had to be something more.

Whatever he saw, it was something that wasn't in the book.

Nor was it something that seemed completely made up, because he knows somehow that *it was real*.

Tommy frowns, and relents.

"Fine." He says, grabbing his spoon and taking that disgusting soup into his mouth. *Fuck You*, he thinks, seeing the pleased face the pig bastard has.

Tommy could do a cross-reference of the book that he's read and the book that he's living, and there'd be *very distinct* differences that Tommy can and will point out.

For one, the 'subtle adoration, lack of indifference' comments that William Soot has about his brother are *very mundane* ways of saying 'clingy, overprotective, somehow frighteningly caring'.

"Techie," Tommy would call. "I can walk, by the way." He'd deadpan,

And for the nth time since he's woken up, Technoblade would answer: "No, this is quicker."

While maybe 'subtle' would work for everyone else, Tommy could very easily note how his boring and very badly made explanations and excuses for taking care of Tommy are less 'subtle' and more, how does he say this— *embarrassing*.

From behind, in a coo-like voice, Puffy comments. "Sorry, Toms," Puffy would say and Tommy could *hear* the smile in her voice. "But you've only just recovered. Overexertion is no joke," She frowns, remembering one fact: "Especially after you've been unconscious for more than 20 days now."

"24." Technoblade corrects.

Tommy exhales. Right, yes, when Ranboo said *about more than a week*, he'd forgotten to say *how much more than a week* it was.

Apparently, he'd been unconscious for nearly a month now which Tommy believes is why they've begun to be so clingy over him. All of them, watching every action out of concern for Tommy. While he shouldn't be shocked that this is how they respond, he is also rather peeved because he can't start stealing shit again.

Today, about a week since he'd woken up in the Emerald Palace and two days since he was declared fit to go back to his own palace, he's finally going to go home and back. He was very tired of having to always keep his guard up with Technoblade so close in his vicinity. He's finally going back to his own place, the Sapphire Palace. It is where his treasures lie and where he knows his passageways the most. It's *his* little den, and thus it's the only place he could call home within his existence in this place.

Not to mention, he is *tired* of being babied.

The child prince huffs, but he actually gets the concern. Somewhat. See, when he'd tripped because of that stupid rug, Tommy would have normally been able to at least catch himself. He was far too weak, however, given that he'd been unconscious for a good *23 days*.

As if hearing his distress, Technoblade pauses, and at a right pace puts Tommy down on his feet. He doesn't let go of Tommy under his armpits though, as if Tommy could topple over at any second. "You sure you can walk, kid?" Techno asks,

Tommy would have said something childish, or something funny, but he sees the genuine concern and the serious look on Technoblade's eyes and he falters a little bit. "I can." Tommy

answers honestly.

Technoblade nods, and he lets go of Tommy. Honestly, Tommy feels *so* much better standing on his own. It feels like he could actually stretch out his muscles.

Though Technoblade had finally given Tommy the W in walking, Tommy also finds himself rather embarrassed. Technoblade is holding his hand, and while it doesn't hurt at all, it is also firm enough that should Tommy fall he would be easily caught.

He's a full grown man, likely older than Technoblade himself. He could very well walk on his own, damn it.

But when he looks up, he sees how content Technoblade looks and Tommy finds all the comments die on his tongue.

It's a better look on him than whatever depressing shit he saw when he was near death. Tommy would give him this W for once.

They come to a stop at the entrance of the Sapphire palace, and Tommy feels his heart swell in excitement at the thought of finally being able to run around in his own space and only so seldomly visit his annoying brother. "We're home!" Tommy declares, raising both of his hands. Not that he had to raise the other, it was already raised in the first place because of how short Tommy is compared to Technoblade who so easily towers over him.

Tommy looks up at Technoblade,

Who looks at the palace in disgust.

"You've been living here, Theseus?" There's a scrunchy to Technoblade's nose, and Tommy would laugh at it if it didn't mean that he was literally insulting his place of residence.

Tommy tugs Technoblade's arm, insisting silently that he stays here before his stay at Emerald extends for any bullshit reason. "Yup!" Tommy says.

Instead of tugging his arm free, he somehow tugs Technoblade all the way back to his room with Cara trailing behind them. "Captain," Technoblade calls without turning to look at her.

"Hm?"

"Has this palace always been like this?" Technoblade asks.

Tommy would scoff if it didn't mean that he'd somehow be knocked out again to return to his comatose state if he goes out of character. How dare he insult his den? This is leagues better than how Technoblade left it as when Tommy had first inhabited the area.

"Well, yes." Puffy looks around. "To be honest, it's a lot neater now than before. Has the staff been changed?"

“Yup!” Tommy says, remembering the tension between Sam and the rest of the servants. He’s glad that Puffy was the one Technoblade chose to come with, rather than Sam. “The maids this time are really nice and really serious about their work!” He’s proud about that, actually, because while he’d beaten the affection of the previous servants, he didn’t need to do a lot to gain the current batch’s respect. It seemed pre-installed. Tommy thought that that was swell.

Technoblade, on the other hand, did not look the least bit impressed.

He ignores how the servants that they’d pass by would gape and bow overdramatically to both the princes. Tommy would at least wave at them with his free hand but Technoblade wouldn’t even pause to acknowledge any of them. It’s rather, what’s the word, *annoying* . Snobbish. Pig bastard.

The three finally, upon Tommy’s unspoken insistence, end up at the door of Tommy’s room.

Still, Tommy could not tug his hand free from Technoblade’s hold. He ends up pulling the three *into* his little room.

It’s homey, with cushions and toys placed in places they aren’t supposed to be put in, but somehow it makes sense when you remember it’s a child’s room. Puffy looks at the room like it’s normal. Well, it is to her. Puffy has been here multiple times before, after all. She was his nanny and she’s also been by his side for so long now.

Technoblade, though, seems to forget that he is a child in a child’s room.

He pulls Tommy to his arms, again carrying the kid. “You’re moving in with me, this is a pigsty.” He tells Tommy, who didn’t even get a decent look at his own bedroom. “Move the Prince’s Residence into the Emerald Palace.” Technoblade declares, and all the servants who bear witness to his words immediately move into action.

Puffy looks amused; Technoblade, satisfied; Tommy, on the other hand, feels nothing but irritation.

Alright, you know what? The security of his neck is secured. It’s tightlocked. Saved. Not a single blade is the least bit *close* to harming his neck least of all a single strand of his hair.

If Technoblade is changed, proved his case against being , showing his true colors and proving himself to be an outright annoying clingy *bitch* , well, Tommy would just have to do the same.

He is going to be an absolute fucking menace from now on.

rushed WHEEZE

It's sorta a filler chapter which is why it's highkey uneventful. I just need to finish /something/ before i suffer through midterms next week (pray for me btw, or wish me luck, anything of good will is appreciated at this point lmao)

again, unbeta'ed (currently no plans of getting betas for multichaptered works of mine aslfkjsdf sorry) tho if u see smth inconsistent feel free to ask / tell me because I am really open to criticism WHEEZE

also, yea, ik i said that id update my other unfinished fics but also i got a burst of inspiration with this one after figuring out one juicy, painful plot twist for later on (haha og wmmmap readers know this, but also im adding a juicy lil twist in it)

ALSO ALSO next few chapters I'll be introducing a VITAL bunch of characters now that technically the first arc of the fic had finished (technically if you follow the triangle plot scheme this is somewhere around the introductions, the rising action is next where i skew things a little bit from the og material) Feel free to guess who's making an appearance, wink.

ALSO!! An Edit of the previous chapter: Remember the dream tommy had of techno? I changed it so that in the dream, Technoblade's hair wasn't pink, it's something burgundy / red like blood. I also implied I think that Technoblade as a child's hadn't had hair like that before, indicating that there was a transformation sometime inbetween his child years and his teenage years. That's all!!

Anyhoo, comments are really appreciated!! I love seeing you guys brainrot, cos I'm brainrotting too WHEEZE Sorry if I don't reply a lot or at all, I honestly don't know what to say or how to say thank you in 3249843052349512 different ways LMAO. SO here's a group thanks in advance and for the other comments!! Thank yoU!

also read my other fic, [Kaleidoscope Lead](#). (DONT FORGET TO READ ITS TAGS THOUGH /SRS) im sorta proud of it. if you've read a webtoon called roxana / the way to protect the female lead's older brother, you'd hopefully like this one ^u^ im doing a series of oneshots on it sometime as a side project

Celebratory Superiority Pinata! (Birthday Part 1)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“I told you,” Tommy hisses at Ranboo, who was hidden beside him.

“I know very well not to listen to whatever it is that you say.” Ranboo hisses back, but Tommy had shoved a finger on the taller kid’s lips.

The two of them are hidden behind the shrubbery. Ranboo had been out here to sneak Tommy out for reasons he will reveal later, and Tommy had held Ranboo hostage for the mere fact that the Imperial Prince Technoblade would definitely believe Tommy’s words over the mage’s—regardless of whether or not mentioned mage had been the one to save the younger prince in the first place.

Meanwhile Ranboo has Tommy on a chokehold as well, seeing somehow Ranboo senses something wrong in Tommy.

“You’re not Theseus, are you?” Ranboo had asked one day, sometime in between his quick recovery and when he’d convinced Techno he could walk alone. It had been so out of the blue that Tommy had to take a moment to comprehend his question. “I had been meaning to ask, but your soul isn’t very... fitting.”

And Tommy had known that. He’s always known that, but for someone else other than him to point that out— well, it was jarring. Concerning. Frightening. “I’m Theseus, the fuck do you mean?” Tommy retorts, though a bit of his frustration was pressed too much into his voice.

“Well, I wouldn’t know.” Ranboo said, but with a tilt to his head there glimmered this curiosity. It feels like he’s about ready to cut Tommy up to observe him. It’s a frightening sight, especially for someone who looked like an expert on this sort of unusual occurrence. “But I know that you don’t belong here, do you?”

Tommy scowled. “YOU Don’t belong here, prick! You and your suddenly childish self. That’s suspicious, innit? You’re a fucking child right now! You’re awfully fucking sus, Ranboob!” He started babbling— something he does best, and with a few accusations here and there, Tommy had thought that Ranboo dropped the topic.

Then he gave Tommy this ridiculous look, one that didn’t make him want to cry.

And he said: “It must have been lonely,”

All the words in between had meant so much for Tommy.

It must have been so lonely, to be so misunderstood. To have people look down at you for the things that he had to regain again. It must have been so lonely to stand in the place of a child,

being talked down on despite having the inner workings of someone who should have been on equal footing to them when it comes to age. It must have been so lonely, to be someone you're not.

By the end of it— or what Tommy insisted was the end of it, Ranboo smiled at him with this ridiculous understanding, and Tommy was not bawling his eyes out at the fact that holy shit, someone knows, and that someone isn't out here to kill him.

But by the end of it, Tommy had somehow known that Ranboo wouldn't drop this. He just decided not to talk about it.

Thankfully, Ranboo had expressed this concern to Tommy alone. Tommy was certain that somehow the Imperial Prince— Techno, would find a way to fix this, which is to say totally expel Tommy from Theseus' body. He didn't clarify what Ranboo had meant when he mentioned things like souls and the like. Tommy had the urge to ask again, but he didn't want to bring the conversation up.

Somewhere between fearing for his life and suddenly loving it, Tommy had developed this ownership.

Because somehow this is his now. Not just Theseus'. He's changed so much from the book already. Puffy won't be leading the revolution. Technoblade somehow already values his life. The Northern Duchy is friends with him. For Primes' sake he's living in the Emerald Palace, the palace of the Imperial Prince, head honcho with the Emperor gone. He's Tommy, the beloved prince. He isn't Theseus the lone prince. No, he's changed that with strenuous effort.

But it isn't flawless,

Which is to say, both of them have something against each other. A collateral, in case one party snitches first. A stalemate, if you will.

And this also means that technically Tommy could still boss Ranboo around on the sheer principle of being the prince in this stalemate relationship.

"Now!" Tommy whisper-shouts, and he runs to the next tree. Ranboo is tailing him, making sure that no guards should spot them running from the palace and into the open space.

Eventually, they both hide behind one of the trees. Tommy peeks around to see if they've been spotted, only to find that fortunately the guards are still none the wiser. He lets out a sigh of relief, now leaning against the trunk of the tree. He ignores how the barks scratch uncomfortably at his sleep wear and instead focuses on the sheer excitement of finally reuniting with his Clementine.

Yes, this is what this is all about, actually. He wants to see Clementine again.

While they walk blissfully through the part of the garden bordered by a brief forest, Ranboo had the audacity to ask. "Why are you so attached to Clementine, anyway?" He asks, and

Tommy appreciates how Ranboo finally uses Clementine's name. "It—" He clears his throat before Tommy could so *rightfully* correct him. " *HE* is a sort of... not very *orthodox* species to choose for a pet, no?"

Tommy rolls his eyes. "And?" He says. "Are you fucken' telling me that I can't befriend someone because they're *unorthodox* for me to befriend?" He accuses Ranboo, enjoying how the weird mage-thing is squirming at the accusation. "You and your internal *classist* . A piece of shit, you are. You make me fucking sick." And while Tommy tends to remove any form of sarcastic tone, he could trust that Ranboo could at least discern that he doesn't actually think that.

Because Ranboo is a wrongun, and admit it or not, wronguns are actually, begrudgingly, smart.

"Excuse you, I *am not* a classist— wait that's not even the word!" Ranboo retorts.

"Yeah? What's the word then, huh?" Tommy taunts. "Why do *you* know?" He tilts his head mockingly. "Whatever it is, you must be one of them then—"

"That logic is stupid and you know it!"

Tommy barks out a laugh, rambunctious in nature. It's been a while since he's actually... hung out with someone he didn't have to keep the regal side up with. In fact, seven years now.

Perhaps even more, considering he'd lost so much even before he'd been... misplaced as Theseus.

It's difficult to recognize that, actually— that it's been *seven* years since he's arrived in this place. To him, it's all still so jarring. It's an odd mix of fitting in and being so out of place. Because he still knows, internally, that he's *wrong* , and he's not supposed to be here, and that in the real timeline Theseus should have been here alone and suffering.

And Tommy had skipped all of that.

Tommy looks at Ranboo who, despite being physically Tommy's age, is still *annoyingly fucking tall* . He sees him, and he wonders that in the other world, the time from which he should have been isolated and unloved, would Theseus like him? A friend, someone just *there* and present. Because Tommy knew that by no means is Theseus unlovable. Hell, if anything, Theseus would have been so lovable if his circumstances allowed him the chance to be loved.

There's an odd, bitter thing at his throat that incessantly reminds Tommy that things wouldn't have been as it is now if he hadn't changed so much. It wants him to dislike everyone who bends to his will for just ignoring who Theseus would have been without him. It wants him to run, leave everyone reeling and hurt like Theseus had been in that book.

But something else, something that seems new yet is inherently quite old, wraps around his chest, filling in the viscera with something so light and disgustingly forgiving.

He hates this. He hates having to think about all of it, in a stupid, spiral where he has to revisit all the points where he had been wrong and where he *could have* been wronged. Grudges are a bitter thing, but a necessary precaution.

The sky is clear when they arrive at the clearing. Clementine is already waiting at the center of it, likely distracted by some flower that was yet to bloom. “Clem!” Tommy shouts from a distance, and Clementine perks up from where he was sat and turns to find the source of the shouting.

He skips on his way to Tommy, hopping while he runs. Tommy kneels and opens his arms wide to greet his beloved in a hug.

Clementine jumps into Tommy’s arms, snuggling at Tommy’s neck.

Distantly, and somewhere in his peripherals, Tommy could spot some ethereal glowing. He knows it’s Ranboo, somehow, doing the thing. The magic thing. The one with the jazz hands that makes sure that he doesn’t get a repeat coma and makes sure that Technoblade doesn’t somehow kill him in the near future.

When Clementine calms down, now just playing against Tommy’s lap and bringing him stray gold he’d somehow spotted, Tommy answers the question. “I just like animals.” Tommy says, sincerely. “They’re straightforward, easier to understand.”

“Sorry?” Ranboo didn’t seem to get the assignment that currently Tommy was being in a sentimental fucking mood right now. He himself is tempted to break out of it, but he decided to give both Ranboo and himself this. Just this once.

“Animals don’t have ulterior motives, lies, multiple faces in which you always have to watch out for.” Tommy continues. “It’s why I love Clementine, hell, even if Clementine was some sort of bug I would have loved him equally for just being here with me.”

Ranboo seemed quiet, and Tommy took that as a ‘go’ sign to continue with whatever ridiculous ramble he’s going on about. It’s nice to be able to speak as who he is and not as some sort of child. It feels a lot less fucking irritating to pitch his voice about twenty pitches higher. “It’s easier to reciprocate their affection, because you know that the only betrayal they could ever do is one out of pure necessity. They could bite you, but you’d know it’d be because they dislike you. They could make oogly eyes at you, and you’d know it’d be because they want something from you.

“And us, we’re a lot different, aren’t we?”

Tommy feels awkward opening up all of a sudden. He’s suddenly feeling a lot stupid for hoping that he’d be understood out of the blue or something. Ranboo still isn’t saying anything about it and he’s starting to feel fucken’ anxious over it. “Of course you wouldn’t understand, seeing that you’re an animal yourself.” Tommy says, trying to negate anything serious. “A fucking animal, you are, simple minded thing—”

“Yeah, humans are... a lot strange.” Ranboo says, keeping his eyes on Clementine. It’s as if he’s avoiding Tommy’s gaze. “It’s strange how so many humans keep animal traits—hybrids,

but are still inherently more complex.” He hums. It startles Tommy when Ranboo turns to look at *him* . “Not to mention, the *things* that are neither animal nor human.”

The little prince blinks. The fuck? What’s he saying? “OI! ARE YOU SAYING I’M NOT EVEN A LIVING THING!?” Tommy shouts, and this makes Ranboo flinch *hilariously* .

“No! You’re missing my— Okay, you know what? I give up. You’ve got a point.”

They banter for a bit, Clementine skittering around them playfully while Ranboo’s hands glow and flicker depending on how often they go into contact. Tommy continues to taunt Ranboo, and him the same.

Eventually they get tired, and Tommy has his back on the grassy ground with Ranboo. Clementine is playing with Tommy’s hair, gnawing at it playfully. Ranboo is doing whatever the fuck, and Tommy is just

Looking at the night sky.

It’s odd how similar the sky here is to the sky in his original world. It’s jarring how similar things are, how different everything is.

He takes a moment to take things in as they are. It feels calm for the first time since he’d recovered from that event. He’d been bombarded by letters from people he had never met in his life, and he’d been bombarded with far too much care and affection by everyone *including* Technoblade. He admits, at some point he’d missed when Technoblade would accidentally swing something vaguely dangerous at him at a futile attempt to murder him. At least he’d be used to it.

Now he’s still at this sick denial phase where he’s inbetween believing that everything is out to murder him and believing that everyone is out to murder *for* him. It is a terrifying shift and quite frankly not something he’d really like to test.

This gives him leeway to be a little shit, though, so he’s at least relieved a bit of his pent up frustration with pranks he easily gets away with.

“Boob boy,” Tommy calls out,

“Please don’t call me that.” Ranboo answers.

Tommy tries to suppress a smirk, because he’s at his serious, self-reflecting hours right now. “Are you happy being here?” He asks. He doesn’t really know where this question is coming from. Maybe it’s because he wants to see an outsider’s perspective. As he is, Tommy could see the climaxes in the littlest and subtlest of things. Everything is exaggerated to him because he *knows* so much to confirm that these subtle things have not so subtle reasons.

And he can’t say he’s happy. He can’t say he isn’t either. He’s always somewhere in between thinking he’s fighting for his life and thinking he’s in the clear. Always fluctuating. Always switching over.

“Eh,” Ranboo shrugs. “I can’t say it’s bad.” He answers.

“Why?”

“Well, palace life *certainly* isn’t as fun as literally going around the world for magic things.”

“Why?”

“It’s boring but at the same time blissful.”

“Why?”

Tommy feels a rustle in the grass, and when he tilts his head to look he could see Ranboo giving him an irritated look. Tommy just barks out this obnoxious laugh. Ranboo turns his head again, laying on the grass to see the stars.

It’s quiet, for a blissful moment.

“Happy seventh birthday, Tommy.” Ranboo greets, his voice the only thing that goes above the blissful sounds of the crickets and the faint rustling of the trees against the wind.

Ah, he doesn’t think he’d mentioned it.

It’s his seventh birthday today. Past midnight, at the first hour of today. Maybe past today, he’d stop being so sentimental about things. He’d stop recognizing the dissonance between the events of what he’d originally read and the events of what should have been.

Tommy closes his eyes, acknowledging the greeting but not saying a word. He feels Clementine snuggle closer to his neck.

Tommy doesn’t say anything about it, because he’s up here looking at the beautiful night sky, beside a friend who understood him. He doesn’t think any verbal form of phrase could ever articulate his gratefulness for Ranboo.

The next day, he is abruptly woken up by his chambermaids and his nanny. Tommy sits up, groggily blinking while everyone moves around him in a blur. They look like bees, the lot of them, working bees buzzing around him to work. Tommy doesn’t really understand why everyone is in such a hurry. It’s the wee hours of the morning and already Tommy is confused at the sudden movement by his servants.

“Prince Tommy,” One of the maids bowed before him. It wasn’t Clara, because Clara was at the other side of the room at the entrance of his wardrobe, picking one suit over another. Tommy doesn’t get why she’s getting stuff from the fancy stash. She’s picking between blues and golds, and reds and emeralds. Personally Tommy would like reds and golds but for some reason no one other than the Emperor or the Imperial Prince himself are permitted to wear a combination of colors like that.

He places his attention back to the maid who called for it, and blinks. “Happy birthday, your highness.” She bows. “The Imperial Prince had called for your presence.” She says formally,

Meanwhile one of his older, more familiar maids shouted at the top of his lungs: “I THINK HE HAS A SURPRISE FOR THE PRINCE!” The maid said, hugging one of the outfits that Clara handed to him.

The crowd burst into an explosion of sounds, a cacophony of murmurs.

And Tommy is sitting in his bed, groggy, hair a mess, utterly confused at the sudden events. “My... my birthday?” Tommy blinks.

He doesn’t think that he’d ever celebrate his birthday so grandiosely. It’s never been a thing, seeing that he’s been having his birthdays privately with his maids in the Sapphire palace, and in the past two years he’d be greeted over tea time. That’s why he had planned the ‘escapade’ with Ranboo last night, so that he has something to celebrate his birthday with.

But here, now, with his maids all here acting like his birthday had suddenly been thrown a *ball* for, it seemed jarring to see.

Tommy cringes, just a little.

How far gone is Technoblade in Tommy’s charm? Has Tommy been a *little* too clingy with his brother?

Internally, though, there’s a part of Tommy that’s just a little bit flattered at the notion of being celebrated. It’s... it’s *nice*.

Though Tommy is still expecting something to go horribly wrong, just as always. He still hasn’t forgotten when he’d nearly gotten his *head* sliced off in the farm (he is *not* going to take another step in those areas ever again), nor has he forgotten the time he’d nearly drowned while Technoblade just *watched* . Who the hell does that to a kid!?

So yes, he is not expecting such a rapid turnaround this soon. No, he doesn’t *care* that the man had nearly flipped the entire castle around trying to look for a worthy mage to cure him of his weird, influxing mana. *No* , he doesn’t care that he’d taken him into the Emerald palace. It’s stupid! It’s dumb! It doesn’t excuse all the attempts at his life before!

... but being celebrated... It’s nice to know that he isn’t vermin in the eyes of the people.

This isn’t some book anymore, it’s his life.

Sometime between trying on different button up jackets he’d clearly outgrown and drying and brushing out his unruly hair , the maids had somehow scratched him.

Tommy is a child, yes, which means that physically he’s a lot more sensitive,

But his mind can... endure a surprisingly lot more than a regular child should.

So when the maids had found out that there was this injury, like a scratch at the back of his head that no one knew was there, they all *panicked* . It was bleeding out and into one of the

lapels of his fancy clothing. While everyone was panicking about his welfare, Tommy became a lot more concerned with the coat his blood is about to stain. That is *golden silk*! Why would anyone worry about a small scratch over a piece of fabric that could feed an entire family for a fortnight!

“Prince Theseus, oh my stars, forgive us.” One of the maids cried out, panicking and fretting over Tommy’s nape. “It must have been one of the pins, or perhaps someone handled you too roughly, or—!”

“I’m okay!” Tommy exclaims, shouting a little bit too much over his maids who seemed to be stalk still in fear. “I’m okay, hey.” Tommy says in a much calmer and soothing voice this time. “It’s just a scratch, it will heal.” He says, trying to relieve his maids.

They are still frowning, concerned. All except Clara who looked to be raging at the moment. “Prince, this isn’t a minor transgression,” Clara says. “It’s *royal blood* they’ve spilt. It’s a punishment worthy of death.” Clara sounded far too grim for his taste.

Tommy frowns. “So what?” he asks with an irritated pout. “Blood is blood, isn’t it?” He says. “Sides, it’s an accident.” He insists.

“Accident or not, treason is treason.” Clara argues back but in a strangely polite manner. That’s a feat he appreciates, to be fair. He could really use a skill like that but his arrogance is being enabled in this place. Can’t be bothered in this place, to be honest. Ah, what a pain it must be to be spoiled.

He shakes his head. “No one is getting punished and that’s final!” Tommy insisted. Quite frankly, he abhors the concept of having to *punish* someone just as Technoblade had, and just as *Sam* had. In fact, in his life he’d only seen those two punish anyone for his sake!

Yeah, he’s not letting the dead horse go damn it.

That reminds him, he should confront Sam about that.

Clara places a hand on her lips, as if stunned, before the expression morphs into something like a proud smile. She bows. “I understand, my Prince.” She says with reverence. The rest of the maids seemed to follow after, with all of them bowing their heads and placing their

Ah fuck, Tommy did it again.

He *sincerely* hopes they don’t start worshipping him to the point of replacing Technoblade. That would *really* be bothersome. Tommy internally snorts at the idea, yeah, that’s not happening. He’d only turned seven today, after all.

With that, they resume the normal flow of things. Tommy is bandaged at the back of his neck, and they pick an outfit that is high collared enough that it’d hide whatever injury there is. He didn’t really get the chance to check how badly he was injured, but since it was a scratch it shouldn’t be anything far too bad about it.

Tommy is escorted by the maids towards the Throne Room, where Technoblade had told them to escort Tommy towards.

He is so used to being carried by Technoblade or literally anyone of the Royal People Entourage TM that he'd gotten so easily tired of whatever walking he loved to do on his own.

Tommy scowls (internally, because he's still in the presence of people who think he's such an angel). He should really settle that. He had better stop getting so spoiled or else he would lose literally everything he'd fought for— that is, the ability to run away from here. He still has that as a plan, though it's still somewhere in the backburner of plans he's already formulating.

He breathes, trying to relieve himself of the stress. It's his birthday, he has to calm down a little. He can worry about the logistics of his next plots later on. For now, it's a filler episode. Yeah, comfort, less stress, no plot whatsoever. In the book, this has to be the equivalent of William and Techno's bonding times.

"Prince Tommy." Ah, fuck, looks like he's not getting that today.

The little blond prince looks up and sees Sam who looked pleased to come across Tommy.

He seemed to be just... standing there. "Sammy!" Tommy cheers, though he *still* hasn't forgotten that dead horse. He could swear that there should be something here, like a callback to the Godfather where the fictional criminal system was something one of his brothers was fond of. Dead horse head on the bed. Yeah, Sam is sus but as long as all that sus shit isn't directed to him. He's going to *run* at the first sign of aggression pointed towards him, especially if it comes from this green beast.

Tommy raises both his hands to be lifted. Sam obliges—almost tearfully, actually. Tommy realizes that Sam hadn't been free enough to be the one to escort and lift Tommy to Technoblade's room. "Woah, you've grown, little prince!" Sam says, exaggerating a misbalance so that he could make a point.

Despite his near heartattack— *you* try being nearly toppled over, Tommy lets out a giggle. "Careful!" He says, fucking prick. Tommy really wishes for the day he could start cursing at everyone and no one would think it'd be out of character.

"Alright, my bad, my bad." Sam says to placate him.

"Hey, hey." Tommy whispers, and Sam leans in so he could hear Tommy.

"Yes?" He asks,

"It's my birthday today." Tommy tells him like it's a secret. Before Sam could say anything, Tommy adds: "I wanna go on your shoulders today." He whispers shouts this time.

When Tommy arrives at the entrance to the throne room, all the maids had already dispersed when they reached that hallway. There was an individual guardsman there. He's wearing fur, unmatching for the climate of the capital. It doesn't match the East or West either, which only

gives him one conclusion. “Are you a Southerner?” Tommy asks, leaning his head and arms on Sam’s head, rustling his hair.

The guard, a bit off-put by the fact that there’s a *child* on the Warden’s head, blinks, looking between the intimidating Warden and the child that’s just... on his head. “Y-Yes, your Royal Highness.” He stutters.

Tommy can’t see Sam, but he’s assuming that he’s giving an *impressive* display right now based on how he’s stiffer than the pillars in this palace. “Aren’t you going to *greet* His Highness?” Sam says in the deepest, most intimidating voice he could muster.

Meanwhile the kid on his head, Tommy, would whistle if he could. Alright, one day he’d have a voice as deep, if not deeper. He wants to rumble fear into people’s hearts too. He’d be a lot more intimidating. A lot more impressive too.

“M-my apologies—” he bows a clean ninety degrees. When he rises, he places three fingers and one folded thumb down the flat of his chest, closer to the right where his heart lies. He bows his head, shutting his eyes. Oh, like *that’s* going to give him mercy. Poor fuck looks like only Tommy could help him. “Greetings to his Highness. Blessings forever on the Empire.”

Ah, that must be how the southerners greet people. That’s a nice thing to know.

He stays still. “Nice to meet you too!” Tommy says, and that seemed to release whatever pressure was on his shoulders.

The man continues to look down in some sort of fear.

“It’s my birthday today!” Tommy exclaims to the man. “Did you know that?” He tilts his head playfully despite knowing that the man would only really know he did it through his peripherals.

“Happy birthday your highness.” He greets.

“Can you answer some questions, since it’s my birthday?” Sam seemed to make a disappointed noise at that. Tommy tilts his head and body to look at Sam. “What’s wrong?” He questions his guard.

Sam glances at Tommy, to the Southern Guard, and back to Tommy. “There has to be something I would be able to answer myself, your Highness.” Sam says. “I was native a little bit to the West of their Duchy, you might want to ask me instead.” He says.

“Mmmaybe another time.” Tommy says, now sitting up again so he could tower the Southern guard. “This one is of the *Empire’s* Southern Duchy. We don’t get visitors there often!” He claps his hands.

Well, not that he knows of at least. He isn’t often revealed to outsiders, and this is one of his rare chances to get some information. Birthday or not he has a duty to keep shit and trouble out of his premises and vicinity—which for now extends to the entirety of the empire.

Saving the guard's ass, the door opens. For a brief moment, Tommy spots Techno sat at his throne at the opposite end of the room. There are three more people standing before him. He recognizes one green suited man, veiled, and another who was unfamiliar to Tommy.

Now the person who exits, Tommy decides, is the absolute *prickiest bastard* of them all.

"Look at your weak ass." Schlatt barks a laugh at his guard. He ignores how Sam hissed a stern "*Language.*" at him. Tommy doesn't really mind, he curses a *lot* more. "You look like you're about to be shaken out of your boots." He slams the guard's back, and the unnamed guard straightens his posture. Tommy hadn't noticed the poor guy was slouching and quivering in the first place. Tommy has to train Sam.

Schlatt turns his head towards the prince, and he smiles lightheartedly. He bows with his four fingers flat on his heart. "Greetings and Blessings upon you, Your Royal Highness." He greets politely, a stark difference from when Tommy had last seen him.

Tommy tilts his head curiously. What prompted this change?

In the novel, Schlatt was known as a guy who was more than two faced. He had *multiple* faces, all of which grants him this sort of invincibility in society. He's a clever bastard, but he's not one to be unnecessarily fake. He finds worth in everything and he can easily gauge if they're worth his respect and his masks.

So for him to don this polite facade.

Tommy could already guess that he's sucking up to him. He doesn't have an idea why, though.

"Hello!" Tommy greets back with a smile. "It's my birthday today, you know?" He says proudly.

"Oh, it's your birthday, huh lil guy?" Schlatt asks with a grin. Tommy feels sort of irked, especially with the fact that this man feels very patronizing. Not to mention, this is one of the bitches that spurred Quackity onto this revolution bullshit and thus that quacki- *fuck* is the reason why Theseus in the original plotline was executed.

It's a stretch, but Tommy has a *lot* of hate to give and he's rather generous.

"Yeah!" Tommy says with a grin, mustering all his plastic facade. He's trained in this polite politic euphemistic shit, of course he could match this conniving bastard's two-facedness.

"What would you like as a birthday gift?" Schlatt asks with something of a lighthearted smile. "I'm a pretty capable guy, I might be able to give you anything you'd like." He is so fucking cocky that if Tommy didn't have memories of this book he *still* would have hated his guts.

Tommy tilts his head. "I want a new castle." He says nonchalantly. "And I want it full of swords, where I can go swordfighting indoors!" Tommy cheers, "And I want it *full* of treasure!"

“I want horses, twenty of them, and I want—” he blinks, “No, actually, I want so many cows! All of them! I want *all* of the cows!” He watches while Schlatt gets bombarded with demands.

“H-Hey, little prince—” Schlatt tries to stop Tommy from continuing on with his rambling.

“Oh! And I want an entire *library* , built somewhere close where I can walk.”

“I’m afraid I, uh, I can’t really give you *all* of those.” Schlatt says, and Tommy could see an irked expression on his face despite the political smile he could see on it.

Tommy tilted his head, eyes wide and *mocking* (at least he hopes it looks mocking). “Why’d you offer gifts then?” He pouts, and he could see that he’s already testing this lower ranked bastard’s temper. “If you were gonna gift me something, don’t ask me. It makes it less thoughtful!” He scolds, and he points at Schlatt.

He could feel Sam’s shoulders shaking from where he sat. He’s making the green man laugh. Yeah, that’s right, let the little prince humiliate this man. Tommy’s got the high ground, bitch.

“My mistake, princeling.” Schlatt says with a bow. “I’ll make sure to give you something a lot more thoughtful next time. Would you like any friends? I’ve got a few in mind that you might like.” He offers instead.

And *ah* , Tommy already knows this. He’s already long known about their lineage. Schlatt’s father, the one who found William, Schlatt himself, and Tobias. The generations of the Southern Duchy royalty who only ever have single children. William was attached to Tobias—he was the side character in the book that was *made* to be adored. A little foil to Schlatt who seemed to be written as the character you really are supposed to dislike. Tobias was the angel, the foil character that made Schlatt look so much worse than he actually seems. It was inevitable that in the story, people would come to love him.

But in reality, it’s less wholesome than it should be. Schlatt was disliked by most characters in the novel, and this shared hatred was shared between Schlatt’s first hand man and William himself. Schlatt, the sly, cunning, bastard that he is, had used Tobias as a political pawn for *both* Quackity and William. So in the event that William rose to power like they had planned, Tobias would garner favor and by extension so would Schlatt.

Tobias was William’s first little brother, before Theseus, and because of this Theseus had always had a sense of jealousy over the kid. He didn’t know about the situation, of course, but the jealousy would always be there.

Tommy isn’t the same, but he definitely won’t be some pawn in whatever political ploy Schlatt has in mind.

“Oh, I like friends.” Tommy considers. “They’re cool, you know? Who do you have in mind?” He tilts his head for effect, to convince Schlatt that he’s somewhat sold on the matter.

Schlatt seemed to bite it. Ah, sometimes he's really gotta love being a kid. There are some perks to being underestimated, especially if it comes to fucking up someone's pride. Truly he loves shitting on other people by showing he's better than them and that he's being a *child* while he's at it. "Oh! I have a son. Just one, but he should have friends who can come along to play too." Schlatt says, seemingly trying to sell his kid so he could be in a similar position of power as he had originally with William.

"Is he smart?" Tommy asks curiously, and he could sense Sam stand rigid all of a sudden.

The Duke of the South seemed to notice that, but he didn't know how to interpret it. He glances a bit at Sam, looking a bit wary, before looking up again at Tommy with a 'pleasing' smile on his face. Tommy has to admit, the sideburns *are* pretty charismatic. He'd say it brings up a good thirty percent of his total charisma level. "Well, his private tutors seemed to be very pleased with his progress." Schlatt says, "And I take his education seriously. He's the heir of the Southern Duchy, which means that they're all expected to be raised with quality." He tells Tommy,

And Tommy already got Schlatt in this trap of pride. He feigns interest, leaning forward. "How far along is he in his study of the Agrarian Reform in the East?" Tommy asks,

And Schlatt sputters a bit. He looked a bit baffled himself, either because he might not be quite scholarly in the knowledge of the East or because he didn't expect such a kid to understand it. "Well, we haven't yet tackled it I believe—"

"Why not?" Tommy tilts his head, eyes wide and feigning curiosity. It's as if to him, it's *obvious* that it's something that people need to know. "The South is in charge of the riches, yeah, you're very important with your mines and all," He says in passing, "But by the end of it, the East should be equally important seeing that they're the Duchy so focused on *feeding* the entire Empire." Tommy tells Schlatt, who knows this.

Who's being a little shit now, bitch?

"See, we had to focus his education on the Duchy due to—"

"That seems like a rather incorrect form of teaching, since the four Dukedoms are supposed to be symbiotic in nature." He cuts Schlatt off.

Tommy could see that he's pissing this man off.

Good. But he has to tone down before he plays again.

"Eh, can't fault that thinking." Tommy shrugs. Schlatt seemed relieved. He could laugh, but that would ruin his game. "Anyway, how are his foreign studies? That's important for the South, right?" He asks, and Schlatt seems to be wracking his brain for something a lot more euphemistic. Politician bitch.

Schlatt smiles. "I would be proud to say that my little Tobias is learning well with knowledge of the trade and industry, Your Highness." He says, clearly smug and taking the opportunity

to be so. “He’s learning the language of the Adventris as we speak. So many letters, admittedly even I find it a bit—”

“*Learning?*” Tommy asks, as if in disbelief. He frowns. “I’m sorry, Duke Schlatt, but that seems rather underwhelming. I’m feeling very *very* disappointed by your promises.” He sighs.

Ah, that clearly irked the duke because he could see that little downward quirk on the older man’s lip. “*My Prince, I didn’t know you were so **talented** in the linguistic arts.*” Ah, this fucker thinks he could humiliate Tommy?

Fucker, he’s been learning this since he was *four*, and with a lot of time on his hands he’s mastered this and even the old Empiric languages. Bitch thinks he’s so good, Tommy could *hear* his little accents. This isn’t to say that he thinks less about people who aren’t fluent in many languages. It’s just that Schlatt had declared a challenge, and Tommy is dominating that shit with *ease*. Tommy smiles, though, because despite this bitchass thinking he could outdo the doer, his hubris will lead him under Tommy’s little foot. It’d hurt no one, but it sure as hell is *embarrassing*.

“*I am, actually.*” Tommy chirps up, “*I’ve been learning since I was younger. I’ve received such quality education, though our definition of such is unfortunately quite stark.*” He himself could *hear* the smugness of his own tone.

Truth be told, it wasn’t solely because he was pure genius. Fuck, he isn’t a genius at all. He’s just got a lot of stock knowledge.

And fortunately, for one, the mechanics of the Adventrian language is similar to the enchanting tables back home. He’d had to learn all that shit to *survive*. It’s a bit nice to learn things for leisure—it sure as hell showed its purpose today.

Schlatt looks baffled for a second before he regains his composure. “*Oh, that is quite the wondrous thing.*” He compliments, and Tommy knows for a fact that it’s out of necessity, to bide time. “*Such intellect, would you mind if I were to send someone to challenge that?*”

Tommy is internally *bristling* in pure rage. “Sure!” Tommy chirps up. “I don’t mind a challenge. Just make sure to bring it up with my brother *when you can*!” He emphasizes the last part. It’s mocking, in a way, stepping on Schlatt’s ego that *he* isn’t the shark in this palace.

The door opens, and out walks Dream and a person who is *epicly* buff. Schlatt takes the opportunity to leave. “It looks like I’ve extended my stay, Your Highness.” Schlatt bows with four fingers flat on his chest. “It was a *pleasure* seeing you again, young prince.” He says.

“It was nice seeing you too!” Tommy says with an enthusiastic wave, acting completely oblivious about the fact that he’d just shamed this bitch.

Dream and this other person ignores Schlatt as he departs, and instead bows at the prince. “Greetings and Blessings on to you, Your Royal Highness.” They say in near unison. The

other person has a lighter voice, playful and lighthearted contrary to Dream's often mistaken neutral tone.

"It's a pleasure to finally meet you, Your Highness." The buff one says with a smile, and holy shit he looks like he could get so many people flocking over him for his looks. He has dark hair, and equally dark eyes. His face is fucking *chisled* and he's donning literal gold. He wonders if the only reason he could handle wearing such a thing is because he has enough muscle not to tumble while wearing them. Who's this guy and why did the deities above decide to favor him for some reason? "I hear great things about you from my little brother." He pats Dream's shoulder.

For a moment Tommy starts to wonder why Dream wears a mask. If they're siblings they probably have very good genes.

Dream seemed to answer his internal query when he says: "Adopted." He clarifies in a single word.

"Well, you and Drista are blood, I'm just the eldest kid dad picked up one day." The stranger kids. "Oh fudge!" Holy shit this guy is a cartoon character. "I'm sorry, I forgot to introduce myself. I'm Foolish!"

Tommy blinks. "Uh..?" Is that a... is that a name or an adjective?

"Oh, literally, that's my name." He answers.

Why couldn't people choose better names? It's so odd. Tommy is almost peeved about it.

Apparently, in this Empire, it's customary to choose names. Tommy doesn't really get why—something about the importance of a name in this Empire. It's just like how Cara had Puffy as her name. Some people could opt to be called by either, but some people choose to keep their birth name close to their chest. Like Dream, or Technoblade, and now even Foolish.

Tommy nods. "I'm Tommy!" He hands out a hand.

Foolish shakes it. "Nice to meet'cha, Prince Tommy!" Foolish says with a grin.

The little prince can't really help but feel attached to this person. He's a very amicable dude. Not to mention, he doesn't have a significant role in the novel—hell, he might not even be in it. Tommy certainly doesn't recall him being *named*, but he is mentioned a bit as one of Puffy's kids and the Duke of the North.

Yeah, this is why his main plan is to go North should things go south.

Hah, funny.

"Unfortunately, Prince Tommy, I'd hate to extend our welcome here." Dream says with a bow. His hand enters somewhere in the pockets of his coat though. "But," Tommy can't see his face, but he seems tense in every movement.

Now that he's a bit more aware, Tommy notices Sam going stiff as well. "What are you planning?" He demands, hand on the hilt of his sword.

Oh.

Oh.

Right. Dead horse. Fuck. He and Dream are on good terms though. He can't say the same for Sam, but Dream *had* been visiting frequently before Techno started demanding a shit ton more of his time. (Not that he's complaining. Holy shit he would *never* admit it but it seems like he'd stopped complaining a bit before already).

"It's a birthday gift, Warden." Dream says casually, unfazed by the threat Sam holds over his head. He offers a small box towards Tommy, and he tilts his head. "Happy birthday, Prince Tommy."

Foolish looks like he's astounded. "Wha-"

Tommy takes the gift. "Thanks Dream!" he says with a grin. "Will you be going soon?" He asks.

Dream nods. Foolish nods too, but he's giving Dream a *look*. They both do the obligatory goodbyes before they turn to walk away.

Distantly, Tommy could vaguely hear Foolish whisper shout at his little brother: "*You didn't tell me it was the young prince's birthday!*"

Now that Sam and Tommy are on their own, Sam takes this moment to put the little prince down to his own two feet. He fixes Tommy's clothes and his jacket right. "You look very handsome, Prince Tommy."

And Tommy playfully squints. "Are you only saying this so you could placate me?" He says, poking the green man on his cheek.

Sam grins, and somehow it's easy to forget that this fucker killed a horse for some weirdass reason. Next thing you know, he'd killed Dream's favorite bird for gifting him something. He has to placate this dude somehow, and it's this interaction. This is vital for animal lives.

He doesn't answer, and quite frankly Tommy is offended by that notion.

"You did a good job dealing with those people back there, Prince Tommy." Sam said, and Tommy blinks. He was actually thinking he'd get scolded for pissing Schlatt off and for being so casual with the other two. "It's very manly of you to, uh, stand your ground. Very princely." He nods, and honestly Tommy is starting to doubt what Sam understands is 'princely'. He was *childish* to the max with Schlatt around.

He tilts his head. "Really?" He asks.

“Yes really.” Sam says. “You’re really growing up, huh?”

And Tommy, being the prideful bastard that he is, puffs his chest. “Of course I am!” Tommy exclaims. “I am the biggest man ever! I only ever grow!” He huffs proudly, and this makes Sam chuckle affectionately.

“Alright, big man, off we go to see your brother hm? He must have been waiting long.” He stands, and he gives out a hand to escort Tommy to the Throne.

The doors are pushed open, and Tommy and Sam walk through only to find that Technoblade is already midway through the Throne Hall, already so close to the door where Tommy and Sam had just entered.

Tommy blinks, reminiscing the first time he had to go through this hall. He had to walk all the way to the throne while Technoblade is sat unbothered and lazy. He had *tripped* on his way there. He was embarrassed.

But here, he’s seeing him on his two feet, willing to meet Tommy in the middle.

This tugs a string in his chest, recoiling and slapping him on the face. How come he’s only noticing these things now? Since when had Technoblade started to be like this?

Regardless, Tommy slips his hand out of Sam’s and he runs. There’s still, regrettably, a rug in the hallway, but for once Tommy didn’t really seem to mind.

Because he’s confident that someone will catch him this time.

Chapter End Notes

Ok so remember when I said I was gonna reveal a special character about a two chapters since the last one?

Well that's gonna have to be delayed a bit haha

I had to split this one into two because I went INSANE on the schlatt and tommy interaction, i told you this fic is filled with crack WHEEZE

Next chapter would likely be getting a lot of Bedrock Bros.

Why a birthday chapter, you ask?

Well see I planned to release this last month but it got delayed so uh, yeah...

ANYWAY, THIS IS UNBETA'ED AND UNEDITED!! Fresh outta the google doc mhm! I'll write in the afternotes of the next chapter if I ever make any plot important changes heehoo

Brothers' Birthday Bothers (Birthday Part 2)

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

William had been the only one to be there that day. He stood before the younger prince's room, and already it's a stark contrast against the consistently clean Emerald Palace. While the Emerald Palace had looked beautiful, draped every inch in gold and luxury, the Sapphire palace hadn't lived up to its royal name. A palace. This was much like an abandoned shack in comparison to an entire manor.

And they had attempted to cater to William as he waited. He'd tried to displace him to another room, to a cabinet for a more suitable waiting space. William could feel nothing but disdain for the maids who had done nothing but try to cater to him. He wasn't a noble. He was merely Schlatt's... Schlatt's pawn. He was his father's ward, and without Schlatt's father around anymore no one really knows what his real position is.

Apparently they deem it higher than Theseus'. He is a Prince, and William Soot is without a title.

He abhors it here.

He wishes nothing but to take his little brother away, to have him by his side while he pursues his dream of travelling. Maybe he could bring Tobias along sometimes. Maybe these hopeless children draped not in luxury but in politics could be happy, somehow.

It's wishful thinking.

The door finally opens, and William sees how rugged his little brother looks. He looked as if he dressed himself. William tries to steel his expression into a smile, but he could not, seeing how Theseus looked to be distressed in presenting himself so shamefully.

William grins, instead. The frown is pushed away by his teeth. He presents a box towards Theseus, letting his little brother be shocked rather than ashamed. He watches as the expression on little Theseus' face shifts from a contorted frown to a pleasant confusion.

He hands the package to Theseus, letting him finally touch something that was handled with genuine care.

Theseus holds it, and he looks up, confused.

It's answered by William's next words, his confusion being replaced by elated tears.

"Happy eleventh birthday, Theseus."

“Happy birthday, Theseus.” Technoblade greets, meeting Tommy’s sprint with a lift. He’d catered to his whims by swinging the child around while he carried him through the underside of his armpits. Tommy finds it fucking hilarious how he could do something so startlingly wholesome but still maintain that sort-of stoic face. Alright, bastard, that sounds like a fucking challenge.

Emotionally constipated pig bastard. He probably thinks he’s so high up there for being so *stoic* . Cringe. L. Super cringe. Sounds so toxic. Imagine not wanting to laugh. Emo shit.

Tommy lets himself giggle though when he stops swinging around. He’s not going to admit that it’s *fun* . He’s *not* . It’s not fun, it’s *thrilling* and he hasn’t had anything thrilling happen in a while now.

Come to think of it, he thinks the last time anything happened was the whole... magic allergy thing. Even then, prior to that point not much had happened in that two years. Eventually the more... *perilous* attempts at his life (those of which, in hindsight, seem very much *less* an attempt at his life and more as an exaggeration of such).

That doesn’t erase Tommy’s fears for the future, though. He likes the fact that currently, he’s *favored* just as much, if not more, than William from the novel, but also he doesn’t trust this to be permanent. While the Prince of Blood is understood to be a solid, flat character, the Prince he knows now is nothing of the sort. Very dynamic. Moodswingy. *Clingy* . But all the more dangerous because he’s unpredictable.

Hell, it doesn’t help that he knows that Theseus had been punished for so much *less* . He’d unintentionally held onto the Imperial Seal, a stamp thing that officiates and finalizes decrees and is worth more than the entire Empire in Gold, power in a single marble figure. Theseus hadn’t known, though, because Theseus’ education was mostly self-taught. He wasn’t taught the finer intricacies of Royal Etiquette. He had learned it himself up until William had stepped in to advise.

Tommy internally scowls at the thought, but it’s immediately replaced by the widest grin he could physically manifest.

“Thanks Techie!” He says, and he embraces Technoblade in the tightest chokehold he could manage.

Progress or not, Technoblade was a dick in the novel and as such *someone* has to be held accountable for the things he’s done, alternate universe or timeline and what-not.

“Alright, Theseus, tone down with the hug.” Technoblade says dryly, with the slightest bit of humor. “If I were to have zero context on the fact that you’re *you* I would have thought that you’re out here trying to kill me.”

Yeah, that’s about right, prick. “Nah, this is me loving you!” Tommy says, but he pulls away. He doesn’t wanna toe the line right now, not on his birthday.

Technoblade huffs amusedly, and Tommy grins at it.

Alright, fuck it, he's a little emotionally constipated, a little downright murderous, but he's an alright dude. Push aside the fact that Technoblade, in another world, is an absolute prick and had actually *killed him*, he should be an alright dude. Just a guy, you know? A guy with red eyes, a penchant for murder and execution, and possibly more power than he's supposed to have ever.

"What's the plan today?" Tommy asks in a staged whisper, while Technoblade situates Tommy on his hip so he could carry the kid with one hand. "It's my birthday, what's your gift?"

Technoblade raises an eyebrow. "A gift? I don't remember you asking for one in the past three years."

"Well it's about time innit?" Tommy asks with a cheshire grin on his face. "It's the first time we're celebrating my birthday together!" He points out.

The pleased expression on Technoblade's face turns into something else. It's not his *angry* face, or his irritated face, or his murderous face, or even his amused face. It's a strange one, something he doesn't think he's ever seen on that stupid pig face of his. Alright, he's not having this. For all he knows this is

This time Tommy pokes Technoblade. In the cheek. "What's this look?" He tilts his head curiously.

"What look?" Technoblade asks while he steals Tommy's smaller hand from his face. The older one puts it back down to Tommy's side.

"It's a weird look." Tommy says, "I think you oughta stop looking like that."

"How do I stop something I don't know is happening?" Technoblade retorts. "Explain: What look?"

Tommy puffs his cheek. He has half the mind to go: *You Tell Me* at him. He doesn't want to say something wrong with whatever his interpretation is.

But hey,

Maybe it's about time Tommy finally gives *everyone* a piece of his mind.

Tommy puts his small hands on Technoblade's eyebrows, just so he could irritate the man's "Your eyebrows are down but not *really* down, so you're not confused or something." He explains. "Your lips aren't very up at the side or at the middle, so you're not very annoyed I don't think." Tommy hums while he plays with Technoblade's face, pulling up his lips. He tugs, sees a bit of teeth, and notices how the tiney white calcium fuckers are so *sharp*.

Is Technoblade a hybrid?

"Your nose isn't scrunching either!" Tommy squeezes his nose.

He slowly watches while slowly, that *weird* look on Technoblade's face is replaced with one that is both annoyed and amused. A lighthearted sort of amusement. "Oh! Look! It changed!" He points, "You're happy now!" Tommy says with a smile.

Indication of that is Technoblade's ever so slight, tilted up corner of his lip. There's a slight twitching under his eye, but at the same time a specific glimmer in his ruby eyes. Technoblade is irritated alright but not so much that he'd order Tommy under a sword or anything *close* to a blade being close to his hair.

Well, save for the hand suddenly in his hair, ruffling the well organized fluff that the maids had painstakingly taken all morning to fix.

Well, good, he didn't like the feeling of his hair sticking so neatly on his head.

"So, you're rather observant, are you?" Technoblade asks, and there's this odd tone in his voice that *again*, Tommy cannot recognize for the life of him. It's a mixed of amused and mocking, but this time it's genuine somehow. What's this voice? How does he take it?

"I am!" Tommy exclaims proudly, "I'm smart! Very smart!" He says with a grin.

"Tone it down, Theseus, I said you were *observant*, not smart."

"Well my professors said that observation is one of the most important Sciencey things." Tommy retorts. "So if I am a lot of the important science thing, then I'm smart. That's just how it is. It's like that because it's my birthday." Tommy turns his head around to face Sam, who seemed awfully quiet the whole time. He is *grinning*. "What are you smiling at?" Tommy says with an exaggerated scrunch of his nose.

Sam cracked, and he broke into a laugh. "My apologies, my prince. It is just a rather wholesome sight before me." He says with a grin. It's not necessarily *teasing* but-

"Ah, right, you were here." Technoblade notes monotonously, while Sam seems to sputter at the mention.

"I-"

"Quiet," Technoblade says, and he starts rummaging for something in his pocket while his other arm is single handedly carrying Tommy. Tommy, on the other hand, briefly considers leaning backwards so he could make Technoblade just a smidge. Act like he's falling. It seemed certainly tempting, but he remembers what Technoblade's *panic* meant: "*Every word you spit from that useless mouth that does not solve this, is another inch off your fingers that I chop off. Do you understand?*"

Yeah, no, he's not looking to invoke a repeat of that.

Not to mention, he'd been visited by the mages who failed, and they'd all bowed on their knees and arms in front of his bed, with Technoblade sat beside him. Apparently Tommy, in his pain, had begged his brother not to harm any of them. The worst that happened was that

they were all put into the underground cages, somewhere in the strongholds, but they were all unharmed save for the scraggly treatment.

Tommy awkwardly said it was nothing, and dismissed them without punishment. In fact he'd praised them for the effort. Holy shit, at that rate he could have very well been a saint. One of these days he's going to overthrow the palace.

He looks at Technoblade's face, sees how tired-looking he is, and decides not to. He's going to live the blissful life of *not* being the heir to the throne. Being the heir at this point was much like being the ruling Emperor anyway, with the real Emperor's absence and all. He'll leave that to the dude who is likely already really good at it.

Speaking of politics. What was that earlier? Schlatt, Dream, and Foolish together? Schlatt is alone this time, without Quackity. The Northern and Southern Duke together with the Emperor, something must have come up.

Tommy wracks his brain for potential events that happened in the novel. What were the political arcs that had been so important in the novel? There was the uprising of the rebellion, but that is *likely* not happening thanks to Puffy being loyal to the crown right now, and Technoblade hasn't done anything atrocious to his knowledge as of late. If anything, it's been relatively peaceful the past seven years of his life. What else?

Maybe it's the turmoil in the Eastern Duchy? That isn't likely, it's far too early for that to happen.

Oh, Tommy is seven years old.

Nothing happens in the novel until he is ten, two or three years before the cadeaullion Ball that seals his fate, and three years from now.

So, what was this meeting about? They've been visiting a lot more frequently, and so has Puffy. Not just the secret meetings she has with him, but the more official ones where she has an audience with the pig bastard himself. Something is happening, and Tommy doesn't know what.

Technoblade pulls something small from his pocket and tosses it to Sam. Sam catches it. The pinket seems to notice Tommy so deep in thought, because with his now free hand he poked Tommy on the forehead. "What are you thinking so seriously about, Theseus?" He asks, keeping his finger between his eyebrows.

Tommy just now notices the tension of his eyebrows, so he raises them so he doesn't look like he's thinking so seriously. "You look tired." Tommy says,

Sam, in the back, is choking between a sharp intake of breath and laugh. "Err, your Imperial Highness." He calls from behind, "I really do not think that you should be throwing the Imperial Seal." Sam says.

And Tommy, who had been originally occupied with the fact that Technoblade's finger is still on his forehead, is now suddenly shell shocked at the revelation.

He. He *tossed* the Imperial Seal?

What the fuck?

Theseus was almost *executed* early on because of that, for merely touching the thing!

“I’m takin’ the day off.” Technoblade says. “You can deal with the things in my study. I’m off for the day.” He walks past the astounded Sam, carrying the equally, if not more, panicked Tommy. He blinks— taking a day off? Is this for his birthday?

He doesn’t ask when Technoblade leaves the throne room where he held an audience with three people before him.

***Theseus does not ask questions** . That much is something William notices when first spent his freetimes away from the court to stay with his brother. He seems appreciative of how William takes his time, explaining and speaking of various topics of interest, but he doesn’t seem very curious about them.*

At ten years old, Theseus had stayed the same.

“Why have you come here today?” Theseus asks. “I recall that there is supposed to be a meeting, somewhere. Aren’t you supposed to be by brother’s side?”

It’s his birthday, and William desperately wants something in his younger brother to change. To have him embrace his curiosity. To dare be curious about something again. ‘Where are we going?’, ‘What’s the plan?’, ‘What did you get me?’

Instead he questions why he’d been visited.

It’s his eleventh birthday.

“I’d asked for a day off.” William says with a proud grin. “I’d gotten enough workdays to dare ask for one.”

Theseus scrunches his nose, looking to be a bit confused. “Well, why’d you spend it on today?”

He doesn’t ask where they’re going. He doesn’t ask if they’re going anywhere, in fact. He just seemed to stick next to William. Confused why William, a stranger, would stick so close to

Distantly, William understands why. He hates to know about it, to be constantly reminded of how this family had broken so far apart and how his foolish separation from them had weighed its effects on Theseus. The reason why Theseus was so afraid to ask questions this far into this relationship is because he must have been afraid of losing William to questions.

The fact that he seemed so happy with being half a person just to be with someone else breaks William's heart. He looks so happy to be with William, but he feels a lot more like a spectator. So afraid of losing this presence, afraid of losing anyone else because he'd been involved with them somehow.

William understands that fear, and he understands how Theseus would prefer it if William had left of his own accord instead of having it be confirmed that he'd leave because of Theseus. He understands it so distinctly, with his entire heart and soul.

He watches as the look on Theseus' face switches, confusion, disbelief, wonder, and something else. Something that makes him horribly sad.

Realization.

"It's your birthday, Theseus." William says, and he tries his best to talk away the wetness of his voice. "I wanted to spend your birthday with you, because you've become so dear to me, Theseus. Please don't... don't forget that." He tells his little brother.

He understands. He understands the fear, the sadness, the way of thinking that leads to this distinctly avoidant nature.

But Theseus is only eleven years old.

For someone so young to resonate with the pains of someone like William, whose memories extend far beyond his own age.

It's an indicator of how much William had failed his family.

And he won't indulge, nor enable this behavior. He knows how being so distant, avoidant of the issue, will do more harm than good in the long run. "I want you to be happy, my Prince." He tells his little brother.

Never again.

"Where are we going?" Tommy asks. "Will we be going to the farm? I haven't seen Woman-Henry in a while." Tommy says rather brazenly, calling Technoblade's carabao a distinctly different name from what Technoblade had called it as.

"It's Betsy, Theseus." Technoblade says, but he doesn't seem as irritated as he had before. "And no, we're not headed to the farm."

Tommy hums, swinging his legs while he's comfortably sat on Technoblade's arms. "Well, are we headed to the garden again?" He questions, thinking of the potential ways Technoblade would have prepared for his private birthday celebration.

“Not today, we’ve frequented there a bit too much for us to celebrate there.” Technoblade answers.

He squints his eyes, looking at Technoblade’s stupidly stoic face for some answers at least. “Well, what’s the plan? I wanna know I wanna know!” Tommy asks, letting his voice go into obnoxious levels of tone and volume.

Technoblade tilts his head. “You’re impatient.” He notes. “I know a guy who was impatient, once, wanted his familial share. He-”

“Got his hands chopped off for stealing it before it was time, yeah you’ve told me before!” Tommy continues, rolling his eyes. This fucker and his empty threats. He’s holding a rubber knife at Tommy’s neck at this point and all it’s doing is make him want to laugh.

What is with this guy and his consistent need of reminding people that they’re lower than him? Almost ruins the mood for his birthday. “I’m curious! I’m not stealing anything!” Tommy explains.

Technoblade’s lip quirks up a little. “You’ve become a little brazen since we’ve met, have you?” He notes monotonously, near humorously.

“Well, it’s my birthday.” Tommy reasoned, “I get to go away for a lot of things.” He says with a mischievous grin.

“A thief who stole on his birthday is still a thief.”

“And I can’t steal anything if you don’t let me down!”

“You’re acting like that wasn’t the plan all along, kid.”

Alright, this is getting a lot less fun while it’s going. He’s being patronized. The pig bastard *is patronizing him*. It’s his birthday, why is he being patronized on his birthday?

Technoblade huffs, amused at the interaction likely. Smug bastard. He’s being smug right now and Tommy does *not* like it, not at all. Tommy doesn’t know, he’s a pig bastard, normal human dudes like Tommy shouldn’t understand Pig Bastards like Technoblade. He doesn’t see how this is an amusing interaction, none at all. Fuck him. Fuck this castle. He could run away any time but he’s just taking his time to grace everyone with his angelic presence!

And he’s being repaid with *this*? This is dumb. This is stupid!

Tommy sulks, leaning his head against Techno’s shoulder so that he could let the pig bastard know that he’s fucking peeved right now, lost all his energy. All this energy should be well deserved and Technoblade doesn’t sound very deserving of his effort and energy at the moment. Screw him, screw this castle. He’s running away, starting his own farm, getting his *own* cow named *Woman-Henry* because Betsy is such a corny name for a majestic being such as a cow or anything similar to a cow.

“You’ve gone quiet,” Technoblade says,

“I dunno what to say,” Tommy says, and he hates how he could hear his pout in his voice.

“You’ve become rather spoiled, have you?”

“I don’t think so, I’m very humble!” Tommy retorts.

He hears Technoblade huff amusedly. “Right, humble.” He says, and the *audacity* in his tone? It’s pathetic! How dare he!

Tommy refuses to say anything else about it. If he’s being teased for whatever he’s saying then he would rather not speak of anything at all! He’s too good to have Technoblade be graced with his words and his presence. He’s not going to stand out here and just take all this mockery!

Before he could properly take position in sulking, placing his head on Technoblade’s shoulder and hoping his chin cramps it while he’s carrying Tommy, Technoblade had instead pulled Tommy away from his torso and lifted the kid by under his arms. He put his hands out, while Tommy’s feet dangle below him while he’s being carried in a very embarrassing manner. “Now, why are you sulking, hm?” Technoblade asks, and that amused look on that face is still there.

Smug bastard.

Tommy would love to wipe it off but he has to remind himself with his iron-clad will not to test the line. Tiptoeing is *fun* but crossing the line would cross a blade on his neck.

Yeah he’s not forgetting all those attempts. Fuck him. He’s going to hold all of this against him one day and it would definitely bite him back in the ass. He’s calling it. He calls the shots.

“I wanna know what’s going on.” Tommy says with a pout,

“Oh this is the first time I’m getting an attitude from you.” Despite his words, he sounds rather amused. As if he’s *enjoying* teasing the kid. “Well, haven’t you heard of a surprise, Theseus?” Technoblade says, tilting his head.

Tommy scrunches his eyebrows together. “Well, yeah I guess?” He answers. “It’s shocking.” Tommy answers. Hell, how does he explain what a surprise is? “Like earlier, when I saw the Schlatt guy, it was pretty surprising.” Tommy hums. “He spoke Adventris, I was surprised!”

“Why? Is he good?”

“No! I thought he’d be better, that’s why it’s so surprising.”

Tommy takes this moment to jab at Schlatt’s reputation. He doesn’t like the guy. He hopes he can ruin him for Technoblade somehow. “He has an *accent* .” He scrunches his nose at the memory, exaggerating his dislike. “My tutors taught me better than to add a little slang at the end of the words!”

At this point Technoblade had returned Tommy to his original carrying position where Tommy could sit on one of Technoblade's arms. *"So you're this far off in learning, hm?"* Technoblade says, and Tommy shouldn't have been surprised that of course this pig bastard was so good at literally everything, even in language shit.

"Yeah! I'm skilled. My teachers said so." Tommy responds. *"You sound so much better than Schlatt!"* Tommy praises, because it's true. He's a *lot* better than Schlatt. He sounds experienced.

"You sound acceptable." Technoblade says.

He's way better than acceptable, but he's taking that as a compliment anyway. Pleasing Technoblade is already troublesome as it is. He doesn't want to bother more than he already has. *"Thanks! Anyway, I know what a surprise is."* Tommy continues to speak in the foreign language. Just to continue flexing. He won't stop flexing, because he has the ability to flex and he has the talent to show off.

Somehow this enables both siblings to continue speaking in this foreign language. Tommy is a bit fond of that idea, especially because he'd be less likely to get embarrassed by the childish things he'd say. Primes know what his courtiers think of him as. A suck up, likely, he doesn't want to risk anyone else disliking him lest he brings up some sort of revolution centered on someone killing someone and pinning it on Tomy somehow.

"Well, you're getting a surprise, which is why I wish that you stop asking about it." Technoblade tells Tommy.

Tommy huffs. The possibilities were endless, but he can't say that any of it would probably be a horrible experience. If anything, the worst that can happen is likely just something *boring*, and he knows that something boring would be most appreciated. Tommy's had a very thrilling early-life, he thinks he can appreciate the little mundane things.

***"Will you play music for me?"** Theseus had asked William on his twelve birthday, and William, ever wanting to indulge his younger brother in anything he could provide, had faltered. He removes the sheath of his guitar and he checks if the tuning was correct.*

He didn't originally want to play the guitar. He'd brought it to Theseus as a gift but he'd been dismayed when he'd learned that the boy hadn't even been privy to the education of the musical arts. Theseus is a prince, and they don't even give him the bare minimum education. What has Technoblade been doing? Surely, he has to bring this up to him.

They are seated in the Sapphire Palace's garden, at the place closest to the Emerald palace's garden. William hopes just a little that maybe Theseus could enjoy being closer to the rest of his family. It's sometime in the afternoon, and people had avoided the gardens in fear of the heat that comes from it. The Sapphire Palace's garden had been near wilted, if not for the corners that are salvaged.

Because at the edge of the Sapphire's garden is the Emerald Garden, and if anything was unsightly in the Crown Prince's eyes then there would be hell to pay.

William had sat in that same area for the same purpose. He wants to show family. He wants to show, to remind the Prince of Blood that there is still a brother here for him. He had hoped.

So as William strum his guitar, singing songs for Theseus, he had, as any other time, attempted and hoped that maybe his older brother would visit this once. Would listen to familiar music and song and have his heartstrings be tugged as he plays his own strings.

He was correct in his assumption that the music would invite the Prince.

William watches with bated breath as the Imperial Prince steps through the nonexistent boundary between Sapphire and Emerald, as he strides towards them. He could feel Theseus stiffen from beside him, recognizing the figure approaching them.

When he stops, he does not spare a glance at Theseus.

"So, you've taken today off as well?" He'd asked, red eyes firmly sat at William's brown ones. "Just as every year."

William smiles, his charismatic nature that had won over the Prince's patience and maybe even his favor, present in the crinkle of his eyes. "Of course. It's become tradition at this point. You have such an amicable brother, it's only right." William tilts his head towards Theseus.

And the blond is frozen.

William hoped. He hoped The prince would extend the same graces that he'd extended to William, a stranger. He had hoped that there would be a greeting. A smile. A nod of acknowledgement. Anything.

He merely glanced at Theseus, for not even a second.

The Imperial Prince' lip quirks up ever so slightly. "Then I truly regret to inform you that there will be a crucial meeting later today. It would require your presence." Is all he says. He turns around, hair swinging along the summer breeze. "Your attendance is mandatory, William." the prince says before departing.

William's heart breaks. Hope has dwindled into mere crumbs yet again. Not even a word, an act towards his younger brother.

He turns to Theseus, wanting to console the younger prince, the lonely, unloved prince, only to see the most glee in his eyes than William had ever seen.

It is then that the sadness truly makes itself known to William. His sympathy for his little brother, his brother who he had done so much wrong to, had outgrown all else in his already faint heart.

Because Theseus had looked so happy.

At a glance.

At a mere look , less than a second long.

Theseus hadn't been looked at by his brother in five, dreadful years.

But he is so incandescently happy.

They turn a few corners, and suddenly the entire place looks like it's shifted . It's a part of the Emerald Palace that seemed a lot less crowded, a lot more desolate, but somehow the entire place is well maintained. It's a lot less gaudy, everything is a lot less covered in gold. Tommy could appreciate the elegance that comes with the simplistic design this portion of the palace was made in. Everything in this portion of the palace, which he assumes is somewhere in the west, is a lot more comfortable in design and a lot less show-offy.

The area is a place literally built different. It's... *homey*, in an elegant way. It's like rich people had wanted to emulate the presence of comfort in a huge space, and somehow they got the right architects to make it happen.

A burst of color from one of the windows catches Tommy's eye, and as they go closer he realizes why it's a lot more colorful than the rest of the windows. It's a stained glass window, an image not really forming in Tommy's mind until he was close enough to be at the right angle to appreciate it.

The image is a man with rays of light depicted behind him, his eyes are shut, serene, and he holds a crown somewhere at the middle of his torso. He stands tall before the silhouettes of people who looked as if they were facing him, bowing before him with reverence and offerings. There were four of them— one offered grain, the other a sword, the other gold, and the other a scepter.

Tommy squints a little, and he notices how the rays of light are oddly shaped. It's symmetrical, and it doesn't come from the top where it usually should but from behind. It extends outwards from the shoulders of the man holding the crown, like,

Like wings .

Tommy tries to remember why the idea of that is so familiar. Those wings shouldn't look so bright. They should look... darker... and less present. Where has he seen this before?

Wait, no, this *was* mentioned before but Tommy has never *seen* it. It's the Emperor. The stained glass window of Philza who William in the novel had so desperately wanted to meet in his time in the palace. It's said that a father would always recognize their child. William wanted to be recognized. So painstakingly.

But the description, as he remembers, perfectly matches what he's seeing.

Why does it still look so off?

Before Tommy could ask about it, Technoblade seemed to quicken his pace so he could stop being in the light that the stain glass allows through. They walk past it, and they reach a point where some parts of the corridor had things covered in cloth. It looks so... desolate. So homely but lonely. It's like a family had abandoned this home.

They come across a door in the palace. "We're here." Technoblade says, and he lets Tommy down on his two feet. Tommy subconsciously holds onto Technoblade's pant leg while he watches the older one do something to the door.

He doesn't think he remembers William from the novel ever witnessing this. It's a lot sketchier, now that he's dawned with that realization. William has never been brought by Technoblade to this area of the palace. He'd wandered off on his own and witnessed the desolate part of the palace, always avoided and left alone in fear that the Imperial Prince would slaughter someone in the grief of his family.

William had never been this far off, because when he'd seen the stained glass window of the Emperor he had retreated back to his room in a panic.

So what is this area?

Technoblade holds up a palm against the door, and suddenly it's like an invisible barrier rings, and puddles of light start resonating starting from his palm, all through the surface of what would have been the barrier. Tommy watches with wonder when he sees circles form around Technoblade's palm, light, with a mixture of blues and pinks and greens ring around his hand.

It reminds of an aurora, or perhaps even the enchantments he'd once seen back in his other life, back when he was older and independent. A familiar glimmer on tools, armor, perhaps even the sky during one lucky evening. A glow of magic, like the glow of redstone, except there's none anywhere to be seen here. Redstone doesn't *exist* where he is.

The man twists his hand, and circles with Enderian runes rotate around his hand. Tommy's eyes widen in recognition, watching as familiar words glow in the air.

Protection. Blast protection. Fire protection. Projectile projection. Mending. Unbreaking. He's seen some of these in tools and weapons and armor before, but never usually in something like *this*. It's like literal magic. Enchantment magic. Yes, of course. It's...

It's similar to how things were back *home*.

He watches as the runes seem to have been rewritten. There are words he understands but has never seen scripted before into enchantments. It's a lock, some sort of defense. *Permanence*, he watches as that word gets rewritten into *Safety*. He reads these words, one at a time, and the words paint some pictures.

A place of defense. A stronghold, of some sort. It's like some sort of vault, or something.

Is there a reason why Technoblade is leading him here?

As if reading his curiosity, Technoblade looks down at Tommy. "It's a special room, Tommy." Technoblade answers his silent question. He swung the door open, and unlike the rest of this corner of the palace, this wasn't old. It didn't seem like the decrepit walls, lonesome, colorless curtains. It looks *new*.

It's an awfully familiar sight. The window bleeds the violets of the morning. There are chairs in the room, a variety of mismatched sizes, but all placed in the corners where they could watch whatever is in the middle of the place. There are no paintings on the wall, and that makes it look awfully bare but Tommy tries not to take too much notice of that. The place is riddled with hobbies. It's huge, but to his size only. If anything this was what a humble room looks like. A cabinet in palace standards.

"I'd like for you to spend some time... here. For your birthday." Technoblade says, speaking up while Tommy roams the room. "Will you be okay with that?" He asks.

Tommy doesn't answer. Instead he sets his eyes on a familiar pair of things leaning against the wall. There's a guitar case, one that looks *awfully* familiar, and a sleeker case— *a violin case*.

Where he stands is somewhere familiar. He hasn't ever seen this place from this vantage point. In fact, it's like he's looking from a place where someone else should be standing.

He looks up, and he sees the familiar chair.

It's awfully... empty. It feels like there should be people sitting there.

"Theseus?" Technoblade questions. He approaches Tommy, and somehow he's seeing the mirage of a teenager with crystalline blue eyes and brown hair. He's seeing wrong, though, because he sees old, dusty pink hair with vibrant red eyes.

Tommy nods. "It looks so cozy," Tommy answers, and he answers honestly. It's an odd experience, stepping foot in this room. Everything is so different from outside. From the distinct smells, to the temperature, to the *feeling* of just being enveloped by an air so different— it's a jarring but welcome experience.

It feels like he'd been sought out by... by someone he can't remember.

A disappointed smile, one that tries to be placating but can't bear to.

"Do you... do you like it here?" Technoblade seemed hesitant in asking, and it was almost unnoticeable how he's like that. It's far too subtle for the untrained ear and eye to notice

But Tommy is *more* than trained at this point. He's made Technoblade's expression the major tell of his life. His face had once indicated whether a day ends in either life and death, so Tommy is extra vigilant with this man. So he *knows* something's up. Something personal.

So Tommy, instead, asks: “Will you stay with me here?”

This question seemed to catch Technoblade off-guard, as if he hadn’t considered the way that maybe he’d think he’d be left here alone. “Would you like me to stay?”

“Yes.” Tommy answers without a single ounce of hesitation. There’s no plans. No plots. A mere genuine answer.

He breaks the tension in the room by rapidly turning around to roam the room again. He comes across multiple instruments. “Woah! So many musical instruments.” He exclaims loudly, trying to fill the odd (but somehow welcome) silence in the room. Verbally, he lists whatever he could find. A viola, a lyre, harp, all of the choices. But what catches his attention the most is the large, bulking item in the corner of the room. Tommy approaches it, and he sits on the stool available in front of it.

Tommy opens the hinge and he sees the ever familiar keyboard in front of him. He doesn’t think he could ever forget how something like this looks. It’s a miracle that whatever universe he was transferred into looked to be like some sort of parallel universe with only so few distinct changes from the world he knows.

Experimentally, he presses a white key. It sounds perfect. Perfectly tuned.

“Do you know how to play that, Theseus?” Technoblade questions, to which Tommy answers with an absent-minded and loud ‘mhm!’. “It’s a keyboard, it looks to be a little big for your hands. Are you sure you want to play it?”

Tommy looks up at Technoblade with a glint in his eye. Is that a challenge? He sure as hell could accept it. “This over here is what I call the Able Sisters!” Tommy screeches at the top of his lungs, violently pressing on one of the keys. He starts playing, aiming to astound the ever-loving fuck out of Technoblade.

***The day ends uneventfully.** William had been called early to the palace. These were the demands of the Palace Courtiers, incessantly calling for his attention despite all of them already knowing that he had taken this day off. It’s as if they were against him spending his time with the younger prince.*

He hates them.

He wishes badly to change everything one day.

Unlike the past two years, William was unable to greet Theseus. He had been occupied with the preparations for the cadeaullion event, where lads, ladies, and graces who have come of age would celebrate their welcoming into society as esteemed nobles. A show of etiquette, that they can walk among the Nobility without a misstep. William remembers his and his

brother's. His memories have slowly been coming back, and with each one comes the impatience of finally showing his true identity.

William plots to have this happen when he's finally fixed Theseus and the Imperial Prince's relationship.

But this isn't helping. People have been pulling him away from Theseus. They've been pulling William towards themselves, trying to get into his good graces because he's gotten into the Imperial Prince's. He abhors it. The predatory nature of politics and nobility.

Selfishly, he is a bit happy that Theseus never had to experience this.

His strides are quick as he tries to go to Theseus' room. He avoids the courtiers, knowing that they'd drag him into another tiring conversation about their children or perhaps their wards. He is sick of it. He wants his little brother. It's already so late in the night and he doesn't want to disappoint Theseus another time.

By the time he reaches Theseus' door, thankfully unnoticed, William was a haggard mess of brown locks. He combs his hair back, before knocking at Theseus' door.

There's no answer.

He knocks again, and there is still nothing.

Against court etiquette, he pushes the door open himself. He's afraid for his brother, how he's so loathed in the palace. He peeks in, wondering if anything had gone wrong but not a thing is out of place.

Everything is where it should be at this hour. The quill at Theseus' table, set aside beside the sealed inkpot. The chair is pushed back against the table neatly. The clock's hands point past twelve. The curtains have been drawn shut, and Theseus is under his covers, asleep.

William's heart breaks.

He was too late.

With light feet, he approaches Theseus. He brushes his fringe away from his eyebrows, and he places the lightest kiss on his younger brother's forehead. He whispers, lightly: "Happy thirteenth birthday, Theseus." he says. His voice is so soft, but it stirs Theseus slightly.

William looks at him with adoration and regret.

He had sworn when Theseus had turned eleven, to never miss a single birthday. Not ever.

Yet he had broken it today.

William swears again to never repeat this mistake. He swears on a lot of things, for the sake of his little brother. He swears happiness. He swears loyalty. He swears eternity, and the world.

But it would not be the last promise he'd break.

“You know, I’ve always been invited to tea during your and my birthdays, but I never really know how old you become each year.” Tommy says while they have their lunch. He swings his legs while he eats. All manner of etiquette gone, as long as he’s with Technoblade. Tommy had surmised early on how he should refrain from needless etiquette when he’s around the older prince, likely because it causes this rift. He still doesn’t understand what Sam had meant when he explained that, but hey, it’s still to his advantage because at least he doesn’t have to suffer through needless mindfulness.

“Don’t your professors not teach you this?” Technoblade says before he places a piece of meat into his mouth. They’re having lunch, right now, and when Tommy’s fingers had grown tired and his energy had still surprisingly been kept up, they’ve moved on to eat lunch.

Of course, Technoblade had done that weird magic thing to the door before they actually left.

“Well, whenever I ask they seem to be too scared to answer.” Tommy huffs. “In fact, they don’t even like to answer questions relating to the Royal Family history.”

Technoblade looks completely neutral about this topic. He continues to eat, letting time pass in considerably intervals before each answer. “Good. They’re adhering to the palace rules.” Technoblade tells Tommy. “You should know, no one but royalty could teach about royalty.” He says. “That’s the reason why the Imperial Family remains strong.”

Strong, yeah right. If it weren’t for Tommy’s intervention this place would have been on its way to crumbling. Prime knows that the revolution had been stirring since the Ruby Palace Massacre. It was inevitable.

But not if Tommy interferes.

Oh he has a lot of interventions planned alright.

Anyway, the point in the matter is that he doesn’t really... *know* Technoblade. He knows surface level things, like preferences, faces. He knows things that William should know about him, but never just *him* .

“So, how old are you?” Tommy asks.

Technoblade hums. “How old are you, again?” He asks, and this baffles Tommy. The audacity of this bitch! He doesn’t know his little brother’s age? What a dick! Pig bastard is what he is!

“I’m Seven!” he says with a *tone* .

“If that’s the case, I should be,” He tilts his head up, looking at Tommy as if he’s reading something. “Somewhere around thirty, I believe Almost, or early, sometime around that.”

Technoblade says nonchalantly.

Tommy nods while he takes a sip of his water. Okay, so Tommy is seven, and he's got a thirty one year old brother– Wait.

He snorts his water into a cup, coughing. Technoblade doesn't even flinch, as if he was expecting this shocked reaction. Is he kidding? No, Technoblade doesn't *kid*. “W-Wow!” Tommy says in between coughs. “You don't,” he wheezes, “You don't look a day over twenty, I think.”

Fuck, is Puffy as ancient as this guy? What the hell? What's with this age gap? It's ridiculous. It's dumb! This dude should be like, at least a decade years older than William probably! Weren't they supposed to be twins? Isn't William like, as old as Schlatt? Wait, how old even *is* Schlatt right now? How old is William!

While Tommy is having a mental breakdown with the ages, since the novel Prince of Song hadn't bothered to specify *any* of that. Tommy now abhors that damned novel for being so unspecific. What is that vagueness? What about the plot holes? This is all stupid and dumb!

“It's the Royal Blood,” Technoblade answers. “As Royalty, we're blessed with more than one thing above humans and hybrids in the Empire.” He taps at the side of his eyes, pointing at the jewel. “These? These are simply the tell that we're the blessed.”

He continues to eat, while Tommy is still wrapping his head around the revelation.

Tommy really shouldn't be this mindwacked on his *birthday*. Not to mention, he hasn't experienced anything mindblowing today. Sure he's spent a rather... long amount of time playing on the piano as Technoblade seemed to indulge him with an audience (given, that audience is merely one pink haired pig bastard). That's the day so far and they're already half-way through. How could he top this?

“I'll indulge you this once, then.” Technoblade sighs, as if he gave in to Tommy's VERY NONEXISTENT WHINING. He wasn't verbally complaining at all! “You and I are brothers, I know that because we share the same blood.” He says. “And I know we share the same blood, 'cos you have jeweled eyes.”

He nods, he knows *that* much. The Prince of Song had repeatedly made that some sort of mental plot point. “When you reach a certain age, say, twenty, or if you're unlucky, somewhere in the teens, your growing slows drastically. That's me.”

Tommy honestly didn't take Technoblade to be such an eloquent person. He's always just huffs, and weird one-liner comments, and subtle threats. He should speak more, people might appreciate what words he might spill.

“So, we have... magic blood?” Tommy guesses.

“Just a bit right. Very slightly.” Technoblade says.

“Cool! So can I also do that magic thingy you did?” He asks.

“No.”

They continue their meal like that. Intakes of meal between exchanges and lighthearted, very *very* subtle verbal jabs at each other. At some points there were silences, but oddly enough, Tommy enjoys it. He likes the company. It feels so... fitting, somehow.

Maybe things aren't as bad as he thought.

That's what he thought, before he's suddenly out here walking again.

Well, *he's* not walking. He's on Technoblade's shoulders this time, as per Technoblade's insistence after Tommy had mistakenly mentioned how he had asked Sam to carry Tommy on his shoulders. This is dumb, but hey, he's got a good vantage point at least. He's seeing a lot from this angle, and he feels like his original height about seven years ago when he'd been a towering figure. He had been proud, once.

But, well, with Tommy being able to lean his head on Technoblade's crown (uncomfortable as it is), his ability to easily choke the pig bastard at any opportunity (albeit *not* a good decision now that he's got a good footing in the palace), and him having access to Technoblade's pretentiously long hair for him to tangle and shit (he can and would if it weren't for the fact that he's far too sleepy to deal with the consequences).

“Do you want to nap?” Technoblade asks after Tommy's nth yawn. “I had a few things prepared, but I forgot you have such low stamina.”

Tommy huffs. Does he have to put an insult on everything? “Yes, I want to nap.” Tommy answers. “You think we can nap in that cool pillowfort behind the throne area?”

“That's an idea I can get by.”

If William had known that fourteenth would be the last birthday he could ever spend with his little brother, he would have done more. More than measly flowers. More than cake he'd picked up hastily from the capitol. More than a measly golden quill. More. More. More.

He had promised the world, but Theseus wouldn't open his eyes to see it anymore.

William watches as two nameless soldiers carry his carcass in a sack. Two soldiers, a proximal and distal part of Theseus lifted by the shoulder. He could feel the glass under his fist crack, as if he wants to break through the window, leave that corpse in one last embrace.

He was so alone, in that unsatisfied crowd.

No one could hug him anymore. Not even when he's dead, and when his corpse would be buried in a place no one but those two guards would ever know.

William feels all strength from his legs wane,

But Technoblade holds him by the shoulders. He drags him to a chair, lets him drink water, and feeds him. Patiently waiting by his side until William was well.

All the while Theseus' body is buried by people he's never even met.

“Oh, you’re awake.” Technoblade notes. “That was an awfully long nap. You must have been tired, I always thought you were a boundless little ball of pure energy?”

“Ever heard of a food coma?”

“That shouldn’t work on us.”

Tommy resists the urge to roll his eyes.

“Alright, up we go, kid.” Technoblade tugs at Tommy’s body, pulling it so he could carry him. “I had to call off a few things, but you should at least see this.” He moves the curtain that hides the nest, and steps out. Tommy groggily rubs off the sleep in his eyes, trying to pay attention to his surroundings.

He yawns, but he’s had enough sleep.

Technoblade moves another set of curtains. Okay, the throne room really should have less curtains otherwise he’s going to have to make an intervention somehow. So many people could be hiding behind these curtains and no one would really know. What if there are assassins? There had to be a way the poison was sneaked into William’s cup.

He walks through, and it’s revealed that there’s a *balcony* in the throne room.

And it’s night.

Damn, that must have been a damn good nap.

Before he could ask what’s up with now, suddenly the sky was riddled with colors, bursts and explosions of wonderful colors. Distantly, in the back of his mind, something flinches, but the rest of him seemed to have outgrown it. He looks up, and he sees the beauty in the sky. Mixing with the bursts of colors and sounds are the stars and the moon, because the night sky is clear up above. It makes way for a beautiful canvas for the fireworks painting the ceiling where the constellations hang from.

Tommy turns his head towards his brother, and for once there’s a slight crinkle in his eyes. It’s subtle, but it’s more than anything else he’s ever seen.

“Happy birthday, Theseus.” Technoblade greets in the softest voice Tommy has ever heard before.

He’s in awe.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, NEXT chapter is when I introduce one of our major characters :D I hope you'll like it!! I wrote that chapter before I got to finish this one WHEEZE Sorry, was too excited HAHAHA

Also, I joined my friends' writing server :DD It consists of Cnthus (Vil, author of Have an Allium as a Farewell) as well as Piper (PipertheViper, author of Empty Hearths and Empty Homes). Come join the [Garden](#). Sip some tea with us ^u^

(also you get some potential spoilers / bits and wips for my fics!)

OOOO OK So common consensus with this chapter is that no one really got what I was tryna point out with the music room scene this chapt HAHAHAHAA

Basically, it is a callback to chapter 12's first scene!! :D Feel free to reread if ever ^u^

Also can I just add that i am adoring ur comments so far? I love them sm

edit: changed up some existing terminology into something i made up = cotillion => cadeaullion

Reason being that cotillion's etymology means the raising of petticoats, which means it's a ball where women of age are presenting themselves as prospect of marriage. I mean the connotation of it changed as of late where it's simply just a ball with a square dance (which is why I had the idea of using this rather than beautillion or debutante ball) since it felt more like a communal celebration, but eh

Cadeaullion is simply just presenting, I think (it's a made up word sorry WHEEZE). Same as Beautillion where it's a coming of age for boys, where Beaux and Cotillion are used as its root words, Cadaeullion is simply just Cadeu and Cotillion are used as root words.

Friends in High Places

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Welcome back to class, Your Highness.” Education. Of course. He’s been getting a lot of validation in his education but as things are, people are starting to see that somethings have just become a bit too easy for him and so they’ve been continuously raising the difficulty of his studies.

As of now, he’s learning things that he’s supposed to be learning a lot later on.

Obviously, Technoblade is nothing but nonchalant and oblivious to his progress, the right prick he is. It’s not like Tommy is seeking validation from that pig bastard, no, Tommy already *knows* how good he is. Not to mention, Tommy knows how technically this ‘genius’ is invalid because he’s gotten a seventeen year head start.

Now that his education had caught up to this world, though, Tommy is expecting a decline on his academic progress. He’s going to start flunking shit, but he wouldn’t take it upon himself because in some other world seventeen had been the only age he’s ever gotten to reach. Not to mention, they shouldn’t pin it on the kid for suddenly losing his academic prowess. He’s *seven*, he’s at a curriculum that’s supposedly a whole decade under him.

This is it, Tommy thinks. This is where his career as prodigy stops. He’s reached his academic limit.

“It was nice knowing a few of your teachers,” Henry laments, not really minding the things going on in Tommy’s head at the moment. “Some of them can’t even catch up to your rate of learning— they’re trained to teach children, after all. You seem to be the exception.” He praised, but by the end of it Tommy was still doomed. That validation is going nowhere if he’s going to end up utterly stumped.

But also, them being trained to teach children? Horse shit. They can’t teach for shit at all. They’re overglorified scholars who got a good name on their forehead and a good name tag to boast to whoever is handling his education. They’ve got a good title, a good grasp on the shit they know, but *teachers*? Tommy can’t say that. They’re shit at teaching. They’re good at knowing shit though, so that’s a plus.

At least Tommy knows though that there’s at least an effort being put into his education. Thankfully there’s parts of this world that he understands better because of the things he’s already read (he loved the Prince of Song for its worldbuilding, after all), but surprisingly there are still a lot more to know about the world than whatever the novel had taken the effort to write down.

For one, the only things that the novel had bothered to write about were the things that had been the root and cause of conflicts in the Empire and in the surrounding Kingdoms, but

thankfully those shouldn't be Tommy's concern until William arrives to start accidentally causing those conflicts.

Which is to say, at the moment and for the foreseeable future, not only has Tommy got a good three years to properly prepare but he also knows the shit he *needs* to know to resolve aforementioned conflicts before it escalates.

"Do you know when the new one is getting here?" Tommy asks, trying to switch up the conversation from his 'rate of learning' into something a little less centered on him.

Henry looked at his pocket watch, a cool silver thing that slings from his pocket in a chain, and hums. "In a...hm, in a few minutes actually. He's still likely to arrive on time." He says. His tutor looks up and smiles at Tommy. "One day, you might just outgrow even me, Prince Tommy."

Tommy groans. "Ugh, don't look forward to it." He says. He doesn't want to lose one of his staples in this castle. His constants. Unfortunately, things have been getting placed and replaced constantly and Tommy is losing his mind at the idea that he'd be constantly at his wits end trying to adjust to everything new. It's not like he *needs* new tutors either. He already knows the shit he needs to know to survive past fifteen, and knowing Tommy and his intelligent ways of surviving a novel that was written to kill him and everyone else that were once against Technoblade's side, he would very well live past his sixties. Eighties, if he's generous. Hundreds if what Technoblade said about their bloodline applies to his dumb ass.

Point is, there's no *need* for change. He's already done what he needed, changed what he had to. Everything else could stay. "I'll dumb down if I have to." Tommy grunts, and Henry chuckles at that.

He's actually considering it, though. Apparently academic validation and importance was *not* the way to go with Technoblade, but thankfully his charming little shithead managed to get Techno lost in the baby sauce. He's that good, can anyone blame him?

"Don't do that for my sake. If anything, I have to catch up to you." He says.

"So who's this new one anyway?" Tommy grumbles. "I don't see why he's such a big deal in this place. The maids have been preparing the Sapphire Palace for temporary residence."

Which was odd, because while the Sapphire palace—once deemed Ruby Palace at the time, had initially been made to house temporary guests of the Imperial Royal Grounds, it is still technically supposed to house people of Tommy's level in the hierarchy of nobles. The closest thing that could possibly reside there is a Duke and that's about it.

So for them to prepare the living quarters for someone Tommy hasn't even heard of is strange.

Henry shrugs. "Well, you see, I don't know myself." He answers. "I'm native to the North, and as such I'm very unfamiliar with Southern society."

Southern society? "Why does that matter?"

The tutor blinks. “Oh?” he asks, and Tommy is even more confused. “Haven’t you heard? I was told that he’d spoken to you about this and you’d agreed.” Henry says.

And Tommy does not remember agreeing to anything. “Er, *he*?”

At the sight of his confused expression, Henry continues. “Well, he—the new teacher— is here with endorsement from Duke J. Schlatt himself.”

Oh, it’s from the prickly bastard—

Tommy’s gut sinks. “What?” He gasps. Wait. Wait hold the fucking phone. This can’t be, right? Holy shit. Did he fuck himself over?

Surely not, right? Surely not *now* .

And timely enough, there is a knock on the door. Henry goes to open it, and he welcomes whoever is on the other side.

The door opens to reveal a tall, almost lanky man. He’s young, likely in his late teens or something, and he is especially tall. He’d tower over Tommy when he was the seventeen-year-old type of tall, and Tommy was *tall* . Like, *tall* tall.

A curly fringe lies above his forehead and just touches his eyebrows. The sides of his head had a shorter trim, which created the illusion of a neat cut when really, (to Tommy, at least) he looked like he’d dropped a brown mop on his hair and called it his wig. Still, it looked to be styled to be presentable, but Tommy remembers it being described to be a mop when he’s caught slacking. He has brown hair and he looks to be *exactly* what the novel had described him to be when this dramatic bastard would look at a mirror at two notable scenes.

He looks pale, not quite an oddity for those of the Empire but is definitely odd in a sense of comparison from the people he usually sees—

Sam and Puffy with sunkissed skin from all that training, the former with a greener undertone and the latter a lot rosier in comparison. Technoblade with a lively complexion despite all his hours cooped in the office— then again, he’d seldom visit his very out of place farm located at the back of the Emerald Palace grounds. Tommy himself is very rosy and lively, as if life Herself kissed his cheeks and adored him.

This one is pale, like he hasn’t seen the sun in ages— perhaps it was an exaggeration, but Tommy could compare him to a walking skin-colored marble statue. What his tone lacks, though, his entire *being* makes up for. He’s pale, but he’s not colorless if anything.

He has brown eyes. Unassuming, but Tommy knows in the deepest part of his soul that it has something particularly erroneous about it.

“Greetings, your royal highness. Glory forever to the Blood of the Antarctic Empire.” William Soot is bowing at him, four fingers on his chest.

And fucking hell, he'd fucked up greatly.

Chapter One of the Prince of Song: The Beginning Does Not Start Here

William Soot , a name no one would assign to high birth for its ties to filth and its degradation of the second prince's birth name, is particularly well educated with the politics of the Antarctic Empire. He prides himself with that. His one redeeming factor in his youth save for his uncanny ability to somehow pass the eyes of those looking to adopt a child.

He was never a particularly adorable kid, but by no means was he ugly. He was simply... existent. Normal. Dull. He wasn't as cute as Jared, nor as charming as Kyle, but William could proudly say that he could at least charm his way out of a severe punishment in that house.

William knows things, however. He could tell you what fruits were likely to be abundant in a season and which prices would rise. He could tell you that by the look of the clouds, the Southern Duchy would be traveling with gold. He could tell you of all the most useful things, except there had been no one to tell it to.

Who would concern themselves with the wind of the Northern Duchy when they're worrying about a drought in the East? It's simple. He is unattractive to the wrong market.

So, no, he isn't disheartened.

Especially when he's faced with two horned hybrids staring at him, one who is young, perhaps even his age, and the other who was old and regal. The older one looked startled, as if recognizing someone. William is familiar with that stare. The younger one looked curious. Both stared at him with recognition . William could have easily seen it as someone willing to adopt him, but he saw beyond the surface. He sees someone who saw something he never believed he would have seen.

Later on he would be grateful that on that day he hadn't been far too greasy for recognition, or perhaps far too poor to be even regarded at all. On that day, he met the man who changed his life. The man who reunited him with his real family and little by little, his own memories.

His family. His twin, the Imperial Prince of Blood, Technoblade; and his little brother, the sun itself hidden behind the clouds of mourning, his little Theseus.

He looks prim, like royalty, like he belongs in this palace . He doesn't, though. At least not yet.

But it's something else, isn't it? There's something else in the way those eyes look at him, in *who* this person is. There's something about him that tugs something in Tommy, something awfully, painstakingly familiar. Has he seen him before?

"Your highness?" And he looks panicked, why does he look panicked?

Tommy blinks, "Sorry?" He asks. When he blinked, he felt something run down his cheek. He looks down at whatever had dropped down his cheek and off his chin, and saw water. Wait, that's a tear. Where did that come from?

"Y-Your Highness, have I done something to slight you?" William says, as if he wasn't the reason Tommy is going to get executed a few years too early if Tommy wasn't careful. Actually, Tommy *wasn't* careful. He messed up, and this is why he's out here bearing the consequences of his own actions.

But also, he doesn't think he's done anything to specifically *indicate that* has he?

"I'm sorry?" Tommy repeats again, you know, like a dumbass.

Henry pulls a handkerchief from his coat. "Here, Prince Theseus," Henry offers it to Tommy, who confusedly takes it from him. "You're crying, Your Highness." The older man says, which causes Tommy to immediately wipe it off his face.

What the fuck? Why did he start crying? Not only is that fucking dumb, but it's also really fucking cringe. He *cried* .

Is it because he feels threatened internally? Fuck no. He knows this is a challenge he could easily dominate. It had to be something else, what the fuck? "Apologies, I don't know what came over me." Tommy says with a giggle,

When he looks up, there is a sad, forlorn look on William's face for the briefest second. It was wiped off when he noticed that Tommy's looked up, though. Instead it's more of a concerned expression rather than that of melancholic look.

It must be a replay of the novel, then, when William had first seen Theseus. No wonder Theseus sounded so overwhelmed, William is practically an open book when he doesn't have his guard up.

And Theseus...

Oh he's *not* going to recall that moment. It's the only moment he's ever truly felt for this 'family dynamic' in the novel and admittedly the only time he's really liked anything other than the politics. No, it's stupid and not necessary.

He should rewrite parts of the novel, it would do him good. Maybe he can write in some other language. Is Nether a language here? There's no written language for Nether but he could write the sounds. No, that's too hard. He wouldn't understand it if he ever misses a

consonant. He should write it in some sort of glyph. Yes, that would do. Write it in glyphs and write it in Enchanting. Genius plan, go Tommy.

While deep in his thoughts, the two adults in the room are worrying over Tommy. “Prince Theseus, are you alright?” Henry asks, snapping him out of his thoughts.

“Sorry! Yes, I’m alright, I’m caught off-guard is all.” Tommy points at William. “You look so much like my brother!” He says. “And my brother is the trustiest person in the world, maybe even the smartest!” He says with a grin.

“Oh, uh, do I?” William asks, suddenly sheepish.

“Do you what?”

“Do I, uhm, do I look like His Imperial Highness?” William asks, and Tommy could almost *awe* at how shy he looks. Tommy realizes that at this age, William probably hasn’t even *met* Technoblade yet. Not enough memories from his life in the palace had resurfaced, and that is one of the side arcs of the novel.

Tommy’s heart cracks a little.

This William was the most naive version of William before the palace started to ruin him. Something so innocent living in the harsh palace, it must have been so... cruel. This one doesn’t remember what his royalty did to him. He doesn’t remember much, other than the incessant need to return to what was supposed to be.

So, without scheme or plot, Tommy grins. “Yeah! You’d be surprised!” Tommy answers. “Nice to meet you, I’m Tommy! This is Henry. He’s in charge of my education.”

Henry shakes his head. “No, actually, I’m not. His head caretaker Clara is.” He says to William. “I just oversee his progress and report back to her. She does everything else.”

“Oh, my employer then.” William jokes.

“Admittedly, she normally takes in the older sort.” Henry answers lightheartedly, but Tommy could sense some sort of... something. He can’t say, but there’s a sort of vague animosity that isn’t quite there.

William smiles. “I may be a bit young, but I am quite experienced with the tutelage of young prodigies.” He answers instead. The brunet turns to Tommy and he bows again. “It is a pleasure to meet you, Your High-”

Tommy cuts him off with a groan, covering his ears. “None of that!” Tommy whines. “No titles in the classroom! Call me Tommy, please!” He says with rolling eyes.

The brunet froze a bit, and Tommy could see that odd look of shock and awe again. He then smiles wider. Holy shit, is he going to stop being this charming? Tommy is getting tempted to bully him. This has to be protagonist energy or something.

“A pleasure to have the opportunity to teach you then, Tommy.” William says, and for some odd fucking reason that *feeling* Tommy got with his heart feeling tense in palpitations had resurfaced. Tommy’s name has never felt so belonging on someone’s tongue, at least not on first try.

Already, Tommy doesn’t think he likes what’s going on.

Tommy doesn’t know how to treat this situation. He’s gained the favor of those who had originally hated him, and while that was progress in itself he can’t get a good read on William. This isn’t how they were supposed to meet. They were supposed to meet when he was *ten* years old. Not seven years old. Not three years earlier.

They were supposed to meet when the conflict started rising from what was seemingly merely dust. Where the South was being attacked at the Western border, at the blindspot of the Militaristic duchy. William was assigned to the palace when Theseus was ten years old, and he knows that because of the boring as fuck dialogues between Theseus and William when they’d first met coincidentally in one of the gardens where Theseus had snuck off in.

And at that point, all for the two years prior to the reveal of William’s identity as the original crown prince, everything was fluff with a side of politics. That was *until* his identity was revealed.

It was Theseus’ Cadeaullion Ball where young boys of noble birth are recognized by society as trained for society. Cadeaullion balls were a necessity, where at least one is held every year, and the highest reigning family in the kingdom with a Cadeaullion candidate is to hold the ball. Noble Children thirteen or turning thirteen that year are required to participate. Which is to say, Theseus’ family, royalty, was always destined to hold the ball at the age of thirteen. William had been there, and he’d been the only one to really care for Theseus. At that point, no one had even known that William was the prince.

Theseus was supposed to be the center of attention.

Not the brunet who had startlingly blue, jeweled eyes.

He can’t blame him, it wasn’t his fault. He had wanted to protect Theseus from the... *crash* at the party.

But everything from then on started to go downhill. The presence of the Prince of Song inspired the revolution. The unrest of the people were all targeted at the Prince of Blood while they called for the Prince of Song to reign as the ruler of the Empire.

That’s the story that Tommy knows. And while it seemed to stick to the plot, how it delays the reveal, William still arrived too early in the timeline. He’s not supposed to take foot into the palace until Schlatt had ascertained through the multitude of visits that Theseus wasn’t...

wasn't *loved* . That there would be no competitors for William as he garners Technoblade and the Courtiers' favor.

Is this a challenge? Is this Schlatt saying *Tommy* isn't loved?

Well that fucker has another thing coming.

Because he will be stealing his pawn.

"Have you any questions?" William asks, pulling Tommy away from his internal thought. Well, he *had* been listening, but a lot of the words William is saying are the things that Tommy already knows. He's had the novel, after all, and he's been more than *advanced* at his classes despite his attempts to slow down. He can't help it, if he spots bullshit he can and will point it out. "I'm sorry if I ask that often, I've yet to gauge your learning style and progression." William adds sheepishly, unaware of Tommy's thought process.

Tommy shakes his head. "It's no problem, I think it's cool." Tommy says with raised thumbs. "I do have a few, though." He looks down at his notes, twirling his pen on his hands while he formulates the question. Something about William that he knows from the novel is that he *loves* speaking. And asking questions? William had loved to do that with Theseus. "I've asked this before with the other professors when we discussed the geography and politics of the individual Duchys, but they weren't very integrative with their specialties." He looks at his lines of text.

The novel hadn't been helpful either, he doesn't think. All it was was using the world as the reason rather than the center, and now that Tommy is living in mentioned world, it would be reasonable to understand the thought process or the explanation behind why things are the way they are rather than accepting them as is.

"How come the Southern Duchy is the center of trade and not the North? The North and East are the most geographically exposed to the other continents, Kingdoms, and the Esempii Empire, but so far the only thing I've been getting is that it just *is* ."

William grins. "Oh, that's because the Southern Duchy is where the Auroras align." He says, and William moves to another section of the board.

At this point, he'd finally ignored the presence of Henry who had been spectating over their discussion. William had taken a while to relax, stuttering a bit in the beginning. When Tommy had invested some attention, though, William had become more confident and more willing to indulge Tommy in his knowledge.

"So there is a reason why the Antarctic Empire is so abundant in Hybrids and Magic. Our Geography had allowed for it." William draws a circle—holy shit, that circle is *near perfect* . How did he do that? Is this a protagonist thing? He places two points on the circle, and an axis. "Please be patient, I am *quite* knowledgeable on this so I might ramble and get ahead of myself. Feel free to interrupt for questions." William grins at Tommy,

And maybe he sees why Theseus had been so attached to William despite thinking that he wasn't his brother. He looks so... *warm* . It's an odd sight, it's like Puffy but without the

reservations and Sam without the boundary Tommy himself had put between them. It's like Techno if Tommy had somehow saturated what little color his heart had,

Or maybe Tommy is thinking this because he's the main fucking character.

He shoves all of that aside, and begins to actually listen in.

Magic wasn't a large part of Prince of Song, just tools that Tommy had thought were for the author's ease of writing so they didn't have to look through literally every resource possible, but somehow it seemed to be the thing running everything in this world. The book hadn't expounded on the things that William had said—mostly because the foundation didn't seem to be important if it wasn't in the way of the protagonist.

The reason why the Antarctic Empire was so vast and rich is because of geographical advantage. The Capital is leaning to the South where the Aurora is. It had something to do with the Earth's attraction of energy and how the Magic comes from this. Tommy isn't quite sure he understood that bit, mostly because that seemed like an Earth Science thing but *vastly* twisted.

Wait, when did he... learn that curriculum?

"Are you catching on?" William asks, snapping Tommy out of his thoughts. "It's admittedly an advanced topic but if you need me to slow down I can and will."

Tommy tilts his head. Might as well indulge his curiosity. "Well, I'm having a bit of trouble understanding the relationship of magnetism to why the South is more vital for trade." Tommy admits. "I get it, somewhat, that the two poles are largely saturated with Magic due to the Sun's relationship with the Earth— that's basic physics, sort of. Applied Physics actually." He eyes the diagrams on the board. "But what does that have to do with trade?"

William nods. "Well, for one, the Empire's border security." He dots, and he writes on the board. "The North and the East have commendable military strength, yes, but against the others it is still a potential vulnerability. Opening borders there would easily lead to some sort of infiltration." He lines the borders of the map thickly with chalk. "But the South, well,"

He goes into yet another explanation.

Border security. The South has the mineral reserves yes, but it also makes sense how it still manages to stand so tall despite having the most hostile neighbors among the Duchys. Flat at the center of the South, right where the Earth spins, is the Magic Tower. Linked to the Tower is the real entrance to the Kingdom. It makes sense, he guesses. He scrunches his nose at the thought of it, reasonable, but it looks rather—

"It looks a bit of a hassle, doesn't it?" William says, and it's like he's reading Tommy so easily. What the fuck is that? All he did was scrunch his nose. How did he know, what the hell—?

Okay, no, this makes sense. Tommy had taken a whole seven years to get used to Technoblade's subtle cues but William (in the novel) had only taken one look to get a good

read on him. Fucking protagonist skills.

“Yeah, I mean, how are people supposed to properly import and export the goods?” Tommy looks down, a tad bit exasperated at the sight. “Not to mention, it would be so troublesome for the neighboring governments to ask for an audience from Tech.” He doesn’t like this system. It’s as if... It’s as if they’re blocking people off on purpose.

Wait, this is it. The first concern. The sub-arc in the novel that had allowed William a seat in the Prince of Blood’s council.

The reason why William had been asked to become Technoblade’s advisor, and why Schlatt’s visits have become so frequent.

“That’s the point, Tommy.” William hums. “The Empire is a self-governing and self-sustaining Empire. *We* have no need for external relations.”

And suddenly, somehow, it *circles back to the novel* . Everything William had explained had circled back, staying true to the logic of the book. It’s as if the author had overlooked these details like there were the basics of the world. Unnecessary details. All that was mentioned was the way people had wanted to get into the Empire to seek an audience from the Emperor, to seek alliances because of a war that the Empire is uninvolved with.

It had largely involved the South, West, and the Palace only, but Tommy had never been able to read nor guess *why* , because at that point William had already settled it by suggesting a firm stance.

Independence, and Isolation. No one from either side will expect their help and thus this apathy will be reciprocated in the Empire’s time of need— and at that time, when they had made that decision, there was no sort of conflict that had alarmed everyone.

That’s where it all started to fall, where it all went wrong. Tommy just needs to figure out—

“Tommy, are you alright?” William asks, breaking Tommy’s train of thought.

“That’s so cool.” Tommy says, lying, ignoring the sinking feeling in his chest. This is way too overwhelming for a first meeting. “You’re a cool teacher, will you be staying long?” He needs to get more insight from this guy. Every action he did in the novel had been so lackluster that Tommy easily overlooked *everything* .

William looks elated. “I will stay as long as you need me, Your Highness.” There’s a softness in that tone, a fondness that Tommy fucking despises because it’s *different* from Puffy’s fondness, or Sam’s, or the maid’s. This is a fondness reserved for *Theseus* , and that hurts the most.

“It’s Tommy.” He scolds lightheartedly, shoving aside the worries.

He can worry about everything else later. There’s far too many things going on in his head that he might just break out of his proper tier list of priorities. One step at a time.

Fucking hell, seven years old and already worrying about *politics* . None of this shit should happen until he's... ten.

Three years is a long time right? Can't nip it at the bud if there's no bud to nip yet after all.

"Okay, Tommy." William says. "But if I get to call you Tommy, will you call me Wilbur?"

Wilbur? That's awfully new. Tommy doesn't think that he's ever heard of this before, not even in the book. "Oh, I don't mind!" It's just that there are things that are *changing* from the book that Tommy doesn't know how it got changed. He directly changed Puffy's fate, spending her time with her children and with the job she quit her title for, and he had changed Technoblade so drastically that Tommy couldn't recognize the Prince of Blood from the novel even if it looked him in the eye.

So where did *this* come from?

"It's nice meeting you, *Wilbur* !" Tommy chirps, standing from his desk to give Wilbur a hand to shake. "You're a *really* good teacher. Did anyone tell you that?" He says,

Wilbur takes his shake. "Thank you, you're a wonderful student yourself." He says, letting go of Tommy's hand. "And yes, actually, it's how I managed to get a job here after all. I worked hard to be where I am now." The brunet looks proud, and awfully pleased. Aww, is this because he's thinking that Tommy looks up to him?

Get in line. Protagonist or not, there are already a shit ton of people in the palace who bends to Tommy's whims because they *all* think Tommy looks up to them. Okay, sure, he can *admire* some features a bit, but to look up to them as a whole person? They *wish* . Tommy's the coolest one here and that's including *Ranboo* .

They depart, that day. As far as first meetings go, Tommy thinks that that is the most normal one he's gotten from a person involved in the Prince of Song. You know, save for the fact that he cried like a pussy.

The classes are frequent. After Henry had properly spectated one of the lectures, he'd entrusted a few other subjects to William— err, *Wilbur* . It seemed to be like Henry and Wilbur as well as another set of professors had decided to split their tutoring to Theseus evenly, which was a lot considering Tommy had *a lot* of subjects occupying his waking days. Not to mention, the actually did give Wilbur the better subjects. Not just whatever bullshit they assigned him when they first met. Those get passed to the less cool professors. William and Henry got the best ones, the poggest ones. Henry got the Physical and Magical sciences and Wilbur got the Social Sciences and etc.

And Wilbur is... really cool. He understands social cues so easily that he had comfortably dropped honorifics with Tommy, but had just so easily picked them up with there were people around them who could be listening in. It's sort of... frightening, seeing first-hand

how perceptive Wilbur is. It's in character, of course, but to see his masks switch in front of him? It's a grim reminder that the novel isn't so far from reality.

There's a reason his title was the Prince of Song, because William's performances had been the one to save the Empire in the end.

Those aside, Wilbur is a swell fellow. He's literally just a dude, a guy vibing. Tommy likes that, at least.

Sometimes they'd have breaks in their classes. Tommy's a quick learner and Wilbur has no specific time or deadline to catch with whatever he teaches. Tommy's way ahead, he has all the time in the world to study. Those breaks is where Tommy gets the opportunity to get to know Wilbur better.

And he learns things he already knows.

By the end of it, it feels more like *Wilbur* learns more about Tommy than Tommy does about Wil, but that's fair. Tommy knows so much already, anyway.

In the time that he's free— *actually* free, like, gaps in his schedule type of free, he hangs out with Technoblade in his office. Tommy does his homework on a table close to the study desk.

With the appearance of Wilbur in the mix, Tommy had become a lot more enthusiastic about his studies. He's actually challenged, at least, and he's not engaged just because he has a head start. Wilbur explains things in a way that adheres to Tommy's seven year old brain but also teaches things that are way beyond the capability of a seven year old.

Technoblade notices this, one day, when Tommy was so deep into his readings that he didn't hear Technoblade calling for his attention.

"What's got you so focused, Theseus?" Technoblade asks when Tommy *finally* looks up from the book. He sounded a bit irritated, but not the low, scary, *i-am-about-to-behead-you* type of irritated. "You've been so nose-deep into your books for the past week now," Tommy could *hear* the 'I am startin' to get concerned' despite never actually hearing that from Technoblade ever.

Tommy grins, and he shuts his book—not before he slides a piece of parchment in between. "Well, I got this really cool new teacher recently and he's really good!" Tommy says.

"Oh? Since when?" Only then did he realize that he's stopped talking about his days.

There's not a lot to say, usually he has so much to talk about despite how mundane his teachers normally are, but somehow there's just this hesitation with talking about Wilbur. No, he's *not* feeling threatened. He's just being cautious. William had been the one to so easily swoop Technoblade off his high-horse to find companionship with a low-ranking noble only because William had *looked* similar to the twin Technoblade had lost.

And Tommy *likes* Wilbur.

That's the issue. He can't fault Technoblade if ever he does get interested in Wilbur in this round.

"A few days ago, actually. Wilbur is a really good teacher, I've been doing my fair share of effort because of him." Tommy says, trying to weave his words so that Technoblade doesn't get too intrigued. "He's really tall too, so sometimes he has to crouch to go get some of the things in the cupboards of the cabinet rooms." That's an uninteresting fact, right? "Oh! And he teaches an equal amount with Henry!"

Technoblade raises an eyebrow. "Henry..?"

"The supervisor, not the one who hired Wilbur though."

The pinket nods. "Well, I'm glad you're enjoyin' your lectures, then." Technoblade says, but there's something off about it. Technoblade is hard to read but if you know the *subtleties* you also get to find out that seeing if there's a lie somewhere is just as easy as trying to find a mere hint of amusement. "Have you started on the classics?"

"Which ones?" Tommy asks.

Technoblade places his quill in its pot, and leans back. "I'd forgotten when I first learned it, but have you heard of the Art of War?" There's a pleased expression on Technoblade's face, and Tommy, who *easily* notices that, becomes a lot more hyped.

It's something Technoblade is genuinely *excited* about. Surely there's something to hear about it? Something cool and shit.

They spend the rest of their time that afternoon conversing about the classic literature that Tommy has read, and has yet to read. Sometimes Tommy forgets that he actually enjoys these little moments too.

The worries over Wilbur leave his mind for a blissful afternoon.

And apparently, for the rest of the month too because apparently *Technoblade is leaving*.

What's irritating is the fact that it wasn't *Technoblade* who told him, nor anyone really! Everyone in the castle had been busy for the next days of that week and fortunately, one day, he had the balls to actually ask what's going on.

No, actually, he's always had the balls.

It's just that some servant had *finally* answered him, seeing as the rest seemed to flee at his question.

Next thing he knows, he's slammed Technoblade's doors open (courtesy of Sam who had experienced the wrath of a very, *very* infuriated child).

"You're leaving!?" Tommy asks, voice screeching.

“Mhm.” Technoblade says, continuing on writing whatever it is he’s writing. It must be a decree, declaring that he should be the only one in the Empire with the right to be such a fucking *bitch* .

“What?” Tommy asks, eyes wide and shocked. Tommy’s dramatic entrance, and only a fucking ‘mhm’. Fucker. Pig bastard. Dick head. Maybe *Tommy* should leave instead, huh? Ever thought about that?

“I’ll be gone for the rest of the month, starting the first day of the next week.” He says so nonchalantly, as if this isn’t sending Tommy into a frenzy.

Technoblade *never* left the palace, at least not to his knowledge. He hasn’t left for the past seven years (he thinks). He could surely miss a few days or more but he doesn’t think that Technoblade has ever left the castle without its Crown Prince for too long! A month! A month’s worth of Technoblade being *out* of the castle!

“What for?” Tommy asks, hoping that maybe he could get an answer to calm him down.

There were only really a few times when Technoblade had left the castle, and when William and Theseus had a whole month together without the anxiety of there being the Prince of Blood looming around. Those were for situations that were borderline *war* though. Technoblade never leaves the palace, because it’s courtesy for literally everyone else to go *to him* instead.

“Settlin’ disputes among the Dukedoms.” He answers curtly. “I might be gone for less, to be honest, since the Dukes are rather obedient as of late.”

Okay, *disputes* . What were the disputes that Tommy’s aware of? There’s nothing going on in the North, at least not that Dream’s been telling him of. Nothing down South since Schlatt is still a frequent visitor. East *never* has problems, ever, so it has to be the West, right? Issues in the West?

His line of thinking is disturbed by a hand on his head. “I can hear you thinkin’, Theseus.” Technoblade says in a lighthearted tone. “Calm down, I won’t be gone for long and your courtiers will be there to watch over you. Not to mention, you’d be in safe hands with Sam.”

Before Tommy could retort with anything, Technoblade cuts him off: “No, he will not be leavin’ your side for another incident that probably never even happened.”

Like he could trust that. He is so badly trying to gaslight Tommy into thinking that he’s simply imagining things.

Not to mention, fucker thought that Tommy was more concerned for the fact that he’s leaving Tommy alone over the country’s ‘disputes’? That’s some audacity. No, the cool birthday didn’t happen. *No* , he doesn’t *care* about Technoblade as much. He cares about Technoblade the same way he would care about some rich dorm mate who treats everyone like a dog, including him.

Tommy blinks. Wait, shit, now's a good opportunity to be cute and shit so Technoblade doesn't decide to kill him when he's out of Tommy's manipulative reach. "You'll be safe, though, right?" Tommy asks in a sad, worried voice.

And Technoblade, the least foolish out of all of the people Tommy's gaslighted into loving him, retorts with: "I don't think it's me you should be worried about. You should worry about the other guy."

This fucker.

Tommy skips class that day, out of spite, sticking to Technoblade's side like a thorn. Fuck him, he's not getting his job done.

"Bye." ***Tommy says begrudgingly*** . He's stood before Technoblade who is at the doorstep of the Emerald Palace. There are soldiers in stations behind one carriage, and Tommy could *see* them sneaking glances at him and the scene he's making. Yeah, so what if he's delayed there departure a little. It's not a big fucking deal! They'd last a month out anyway, a few minutes to an hour won't do much to their schedules.

They're still staring. Get a picture, fuckers, it'd last longer.

"Theseus," Technoblade says in a warning tone.

"You didn't give me time to prepare!"

"I'll be back in a month." Technoblade retorts, "And I told you beforehand, plenty of time."

"You told me three days ago!"

"Plenty of time."

Tommy crosses his arms. This is stupid. This is dumb! Tommy doesn't even know why he's leaving, and this leaves Tommy with so much worrying for his big brother. Yeah, no he's *not* going to linger on the fact that he internally recognizes Technoblade as the big brother. Fuck no, he's not going to give the benefit. He's *leaving* for a whole *month* .

Something is definitely going on.

Thankfully, for both the royal siblings, Puffy was there. "Tommy," She says in that weird, motherly, berating tone. "Hey, wanna tell us why you're so upset?" Puffy asks,

You know, like it's the appropriate time for a therapy session.

Tommy stares at the crowd looking at him, and they all stop. This is getting embarrassing. He's said his goodbyes already. He could just go inside and resume his classes or something. It'd be a better waste of his time.

Puffy looks at Technoblade, with a *look* , and Technoblade sighs, turns around, and suddenly the Imperial Guard stiffens, as if their necks are glued to some sort of splint. He turns back around, and looks right at Tommy.

Okay, one issue down at least.

Doesn't make him less pissed.

“Tommy?”

“Fine.” He grumbles, unable to keep a strong will around Puffy. “I’m not used to Technoblade leaving for so long.” He answers under his breath, but it’s soft, as if ready to break.

Okay, he would say it’s a *lie*, but it’s not. It’s more like it’s not the whole truth. There are multiple reasons why he’s upset. For one, Tommy is suddenly so unaware of everything going on. At least with Technoblade around he could navigate through his work space and search around innocently for recent events—at least, that was the *plan* .

But with that option gone, Tommy’s just lost.

And another. He’s frightened of what that time apart will do. Believe it or not, Tommy’s not set on running away. He’s already been satiated with the fact that maybe this place is a safer haven than he thought, a stronghold, and the mere possibility of that being taken away because of *something* going on outside that he’d be unable to prepare for? It’s frightening.

Tommy’s adaptable, flexible, smart, but he, like any other person, is afraid of change.

Rationally he knows. A month can’t change much.

But there’s so many things in this *stupid* novel that can change in a month.

For one, it seems like Technoblade’s perception on Tommy had changed in one month as well.

And something he’s gained in such little time could be lost in an equally short amount of days.

But he doesn’t say that. Instead, he tears up. Scared. Fuck, he doesn’t *like* crying. Why are baby’s tearducts so fucking weak? If he were in his old body he would be standing here like a big man, staring down these people because he’s a tall, giant man with very strong lacrimal glands.

Puffy coos, and she bends down to reach for Tommy.

Instead, it’s Technoblade who gets Tommy in his arms. He tucks Tommy under his chin while Tommy painstakingly tries to get his tears to stop. Fucking hell this is *embarrassing*. Fuck off. Get off of him and let him down.

Tommy says none of that because clearly he’s too distracted by his crying.

“Hey, hey, calm, Theseus.” Technoblade says, and his voice rumbles where Tommy’s head is. “I won’t be gone for long, I promise.” He says, “I thought you said you were a big guy?”

Tommy clenches his teeth. God he wants to punch this bitch. He would, if he would just stop with the annoying fucking *hiccups* .

“Stop crying, I’ll be back.” He says. Like that’s going to fucking help. Tommy’s baby body is already wailing, and being hugged by the bitch who caused this is going to do no help whatsoever.

“When I get back, I’ll get you anything you want, okay?” Technoblade’s voice sounds a tad bit on the higher-pitched, desperate side, and finally Tommy starts to consider:

Oh shit, he could weaponize this.

He hides his grind under a lot of exaggerated weeping. Great, this is wonderful. Tommy’s plans are back in motion. He’s an adaptable guy, he can work with this.

It takes a while to calm Tommy down. Tommy made a point to do that. He did that on purpose. No, fuck everyone who says otherwise he did this on *purpose* . “Bye Techie.” Tommy says, still in Technoblade’s arms while he walks to the carriage.

“Bye, Theseus.” Technoblade says.

He hands Tommy to Sam, who seemed confused as to why Tommy was crying—apparently he was fixing some things back at the palace and had thought he’d miss Technoblade’s departure, only to come back to a crying prince.

Technoblade rides the carriage, and he shuts the door. The window has a curtain but it had been drawn so that Technoblade could look through. Tommy sees him from where he’s at, but he also can’t exactly read his expression since he can’t see the subtle lines. That’s a bummer. He needs to see if his acting paid off.

Fuck you, that was acting.

The carriage leaves, and so do the soldiers on steeds. They take on a slow pace, to a gallop, until Tommy couldn’t see them past the decorum that blocks his view of the path they took.

Alright, then.

Time to plot.

HI HELLO,

so something i noticed in the last chapter is that people didn't get the references i made this chapter HAHADLKASJFL OK SO LISTEN HERE /LH The Music room is a reference to the first scene in chapter 12. It's there to show that tommy's 'delusions' are proven to be a little more than that-- how much more is a secret.

Also mayhaps one day I'll get to editing this fic for lapses and stuff JLKFJASLFK FEEL FREE TO COMMENT ABT LITERAL HOLES IN THE FIC AHAHLJSAF Like say, discontinued paragraphs or smth, I have the tendency to bounce around the fic when I write it OTL

You'd probably love to hear it but we're getting Awesamdad + Crimeboys content next chapter. I hope you enjoy WHEEZE

ALSO ALSO join our discord server :D I put up snippets of my writing + discussions on possible theories or smth, It's linked somewhere at the first or last chapter notes but here I'll link it again: [The Garden](#). Sip some tea with us, why don't you? :D

(Cnthus, author of Have An Allium As Farewell, and PipertheViper, author of Empty Hearths and Empty Homes, are the other authors for this server, so if you know them i hope you join heehoo /nf)

Horse Head Interlude

Chapter Summary

The Warden's Point of View

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)



(Art by Inngi from the discord server!)



[Prince "Tommy" Theseus](#) (art by Misfortune / Potato Bandit! in discord!!)

The Fanfic Proper.

He is the member of the Imperial Guard, the only one assigned to the Imperial Prince Technoblade's side. It's a glory and an honor to be by this man's side for the eternity of his life. He will forever be grateful for the bind that had allowed Sam so many days to live and

see the world. A gift that the Imperial Prince had granted him back before, when he was merely the Warden, a man without a name. A man of titles.

Sam was the name he was allowed to give himself. This was granted under the contract with the Imperial Prince. To eternally serve Technoblade, the last remaining Royal Blood. This is the only thing that allows him to live ever since he had failed his own country. His own people.

But he never really loved them, did he.

Duty after duty. That is his purpose. Nothing more, nothing less.

Loyalty is a lifeline down his throat, and if he refuses it, he is to die. Every action he does is in an attempt to live. The Imperial Prince knows and understands this, and maybe that is why Sam has always believed him to be the only deserving ruler. He sees the world as it is, no forced perceptions, no expectations.

Sam's world had been a monochrome under the command of the Imperial Prince, and he was alright with that. Monochrome is preferable, because a burst of color is too hard to comprehend. There are no dynamics to consider. Nothing to think of. He could just breathe, and there would be no poetic reason behind it.

But that monochrome world had changed when an unexpected burst of color appeared.

It was the day he met the youngest prince. Sam hadn't expected it, and he has bets that the prince he serves hadn't either. The Imperial Prince sits in front of a tea table, and across from him is a young boy with sky-blue, crystalline eyes. Sam is looking at the third Prince of the Empire. Theseus.

A threat to his safe, stable, monochrome world.

He had honestly forgotten he'd existed, put him aside since the beginning, mere rumors like dust in the air, but standing before him now, Sam feels the Enchantment extending.

Because the Enchantment had sworn obedience to the blood of the Empire, the blood of the Royal family. He had thought this would only be the Imperial Prince, since he is the last of the family left—but now he sees Theseus and he feels this binding towards this young Prince. He understood it the moment he saw him.

Prince Theseus now has control over Sam.

But that doesn't mean Sam is *loyal* to this prince. In fact, he believes him to be a threat to the Imperial Prince, heir to the Crown who hadn't ascended as Emperor for reasons even he isn't privy to knowing. Sam sees him as a threat, someone who could take Technoblade's position. He doesn't wish for a repeat of the events eight years ago. The Empire wouldn't be able to handle it.

And Theseus had known nothing about it. He looks at Sam, sees none of his distrust. Theseus looks at him with wide, blue, jewel eyes, curious but not animose.

Technoblade stood from his seat, and walked past Sam. He could feel the tingle of the Enchantment ring through his spine, alerting him of an Order. “Escort Theseus back to his palace, *safely* .” Is all he said before he walked away. He didn’t even look back at the child behind him.

Some distant, human part of Sam had felt bad. Theseus looks so innocent, but that doesn’t excuse him from being a tool that everyone would grasp at the moment they find out about him. Sam could finish it, could eradicate the threat, but the Order rings in his head.

He carries Theseus, who welcomed Sam without a word.

He doesn’t know, does he? He doesn’t know that Sam could kill him right then and there.

“Hi, I’m Tommy.” Theseus said, and Sam doesn’t know why it is that he spoke to him. “*What’s your name ?*”

His words rang in his ear, just for a slight bit. It resonates in his head, lingering lightly like... like an *Order* .

This alerted Sam, because he felt a faint power of an Order pulling at him like reins. He turned to Theseus with a curious look, some form of intimidation hidden behind ‘curiosity’. “My name is Sam.” He answered, because of the faintest trigger of his Enchantment. How could this be?

Theseus is a *child* . He likely doesn’t even know what Enchantments are.

And Sam knows this, because this never happens again.

When he let Tommy down in the Sapphire palace, he watched as Puffy grabbed him. He could see the panic in her eyes and the innocence in his while Sam and Puffy converse. He’s innocent. He’s *four years old* , how could he see him as a threat?

But it can grow, though. It’s a threat. A tumor. A cancer that can grow.

The threat lingers and Sam’s fingers should do something about it—

Except he doesn’t.

Sam doesn’t do anything about it. He returns to the Emerald Palace and takes his position behind Technoblade’s side.

“What are your thoughts on Theseus.” The Imperial Prince asked— well, *demanding* one day, and the question had startled Sam due to its lack of prompt.

Sam had only met the child once in his life, and it had just been prior to this conversation. He could say a lot of things despite that. Sam, for one, knew that there had to be something off about this child. He had seen this kid go eye to eye with the Imperial Prince. Staring at those sharp eyes without fear, when really everyone should have bowed their heads with a

distressed whimper hiding under their tongue. The Imperial Prince's eyes were *holy* in a sense that if anyone were to look at it, the distinct fear of death would have loomed over their shoulders like a predator mocking its prey.

Technoblade's eyes are *sharp* , piercing through the soul.

Sam could barely even handle looking straight at the Imperial Prince, and that had only been due to the leeway that his Enchantment allows him.

But *Theseus* , on the other hand, had so easily stared at those eyes. He'd remained chipper, back straight without unease, a happy smile on his face. Sam saw. Sam bore witness to someone, a *child* so unafraid of the Imperial Prince that he'd stayed unbothered. That's an anomaly.

So when Technoblade asked Sam, he could have answered so many things.

"He's a child, unafraid to be around you, Your Imperial Highness." He answered.

Technoblade hummed, as if that wasn't the answer he was looking for. "And aside from that?"

"A threat." Without hesitation.

The Imperial Prince doesn't say anything else after that.

Sam had thought that with that, Technoblade would cease all interactions with this child. He's a threat. A hole into the palace. Potential leakage and source of infiltration. A weak thing for their stronghold. Except that wasn't the case, wasn't it?

Technoblade had announced that Theseus would be under his care. He called for Puffy that day, to be accommodated with him.

Puffy is the closest thing to trustworthy that Sam could ever account for. She's loyal. Steadfast. She has a good head on her shoulders and so much power in her fingertips that had not waned since she'd denounced her position in the Imperial Guard and had taken the role of caretaker.

But she's only as human as the rest of them, and unlike Sam, she's loyal.

She's loyal to the Kingdom, not to the blood. And that is a discrepancy in itself.

"Glory forever to the Blood of the Empire." She greets with four fingers flat on her chest.

"Cara." Technoblade acknowledges, and she goes at ease.

Puffy had once taken the position that Sam now holds. The one guard that Technoblade has behind him. She was trustworthy. She was loyal. But she took a stand one day and declared

that she would denounce her role and title for the sake of raising the smaller prince. Sam, the servant and page, had been elected to be the Imperial Prince's royal guard.

Still, he does not understand why she would drop such an honor to serve an infant.

The infant who destroyed what was left of the Royal Blood.

"Your Imperial Highness," She called, head lowered. Puffy looked up, and there's that easy look that she always holds. It's like she never left the Crown Prince's side. "I'd ask how you're doing, but I know you aren't the type for small talk." There's humor in her tone.

Technoblade tilted his head, "Good, you remember." he comments.

"If I may ask, what is it that you've called me and the Third Prince for?" She questions

Sam looks at her, really looks at her, and finds that she's... healthier. The bags underneath her eyes have gone, and the near permanent scrunch of her eyebrows have seemed to disappear.

"I wish to impose a deal." Technoblade says, and Sam listens in as Technoblade's loyal shadow. He's listening in, trying his best not to reveal his ideals before the audience of two—Puffy and The Imperial Prince.

Technoblade wished to have this child under his wing, to have him be taught and raised and cared for under him.

Sam thought like Technoblade, he tried to put himself in his prince's train of thought. Technoblade isn't doing this for admirable reasons, for innocent things. Ever since the word *family* has become unorthodox in this palace, everything had been for the sake of the Empire, the Palace, and Politics. Nothing more and nothing less, and nothing else.

When the two had come to the near-end of their discussion, when Sam had expected to escort Puffy outside with a decision on her status, Puffy gave a sheepish little smile.

"Would it be alright if I were to ask the opinion of the Third Prince?" Puffy asked,

And Sam had believed that maybe time had poorly aged Puffy this time.

"Call him in." Technoblade ordered, and it's without the ring of the Enchantment this time.

As he walked, he could only think with disbelief the situation they have in their hands. A child. This is a child of the palace, why are they basing decisions out of this one?

Sam returned to open the doors to the Throne Hall, and he saw no one other than Dream himself still lingering around the youngest prince who was supposed to wait. The advisor for the Duke of North, the one so insistent on opening the Northern Border for trade. Sam sees this man so close to the weak point of the castle, and he can't help but feel the urge to properly *escort* him away. A vulnerability, something that Dream is always so keen on looking for.

“Your Highness, the Imperial Prince Technoblade requests your presence.” Sam greeted with four fingers flat on his chest.

Sam watched as Theseus warmly acknowledged him, and he watched as he turned to *Dream*. He’s smiling as Dream bows. Sam knew, then, that setting a careful, keen eye is a reasonable choice of the Imperial Prince. His orders made sense.

But things would have been so much easier if he’d eradicated the youngest.

“I look forward to seeing you again, Dream!” Theseus said, and Sam felt the creeping, incessant bouts of suspicion crawl through the crevices of his mind, itching to do something. But he’s bound by Order not to harm Theseus. That was the first time Sam began to question the man he served.

“As I you, Your Highness.” Dream replies.

And Sam could only think that maybe, there are some lapses in the Imperial Prince’s decisions.

He thought of this while he watched the youngest enter the room, and walk towards his older brother. He’s a threat. A vulnerability that the palace cannot afford in these harsh times. There are already so much going on, the addition of something like him would have been detrimental to the Imperial Prince’s reign.

That train of thought had been cut immediately when he witnessed Theseus land face flat on the ground about ten strides later.

“Are you alright, your Highness?” Sam said fretfully, thoughts of threats and the like having been wiped out the moment he saw Theseus trip and fall. He’s so small, he’s likely to break so easily. He tried to help Theseus get up on his own, but the kid had already pushed himself up on his own.

“I am alright! Sorry. I missed the crease on the rug!” Is all Theseus said before he proceeded his quick and seemingly excited strides towards his brother.

The Warden follows a lot more closely after that, careful to look for any other creases on the rug.

Sam realizes, belatedly, that he’s rather dull if he thinks that this kid is a threat in the way that he thinks. No, he’s a threat in so many ways but not on purpose. He can be nourished to be better, cemented and fixed up crevices in their stronghold.

He watched, instead. For the rest of the session, he took a moment to actually observe. Theseus is an uncanny thing. Considerate, somehow, as he decided that maybe Puffy would be happier elsewhere. He didn’t make a decision to choose either being left by Puffy or being cared for by her, but he made the decision instead to *let* her choose. It’s a rather unorthodox way of thinking, especially for someone who is considered to be royalty.

But it's... refreshing, somehow. Puffy seemed to have done something right with raising Theseus.

The meeting ends, and Puffy is the one to escort Theseus out this time.

Sam knows that he wouldn't be seeing Puffy in a while, at least no longer as Theseus' caretaker.

The monochrome world is under siege . Sam knew this, but he refused to acknowledge it. He has seen the little prince seldomly, but he sees his and the Imperial Prince's interaction and slowly, Sam had started to realize that there are some things he wished. It's not a necessity, nor is it something that would *help* . No, the things he wished were things that were objectively useless, and technically detrimental to the existing, orthodox dynamics of the palace.

He watched from a distance, right behind the two princes, and he saw every potential danger to not just the Imperial Prince he is meant to serve but also to the younger prince. Every twig out of place, every time that he'd skipped a step. Sam couldn't help but think of this child as something so needlessly *fragile* . Something like that shouldn't even be brought indoors, but here they frequent, in the garden. They go around in walks where Theseus has to quicken his strides to match Technoblade's, and he watches when sometimes he noticed the kid go tired, hefty breaths seen on his shoulders when they would seldom take their breaks.

And he's talkative. Theseus is a talkative child, filling in the usual silence in the air of the garden with mindless chatter and childish rambling.

Some of the few things Sam had wished was that this kid should go quiet, eventually. He could see the odd mix of amusement and irritation in the Imperial Prince who did nothing in spite of being slighted—albeit not on purpose. Theseus has an odd way with words, which is why Sam had wished that he'd be more careful with them. So many things could go misunderstood with what Theseus says,

For one, he is almost fooled that Theseus was a dull child. Empty cans rattle the loudest, after all.

Except he isn't, which is what made Sam wish yet another thing— he wished that Theseus was stupid.

It's an odd wish. If Theseus was smart, he could be of good use to the palace. He could serve a good purpose, serve under the only good prince, Technoblade. Theseus being smart could lead to prosperity, on one hand.

But on the other hand, he's seen what wile has done to a person, and he's seen what it's done on the Empire.

He wished that Theseus was stupid, because that would mean that the things he's pushing into Technoblade, these kind acts and signs of brotherly affection, these ridiculous gifts of flowers that Technoblade should care less for— an idiot would give these with sincerity. No ulterior motive. Just surface level affection, companionship.

Sam knew, though, that Theseus is wise. He's recently gotten the reports of Theseus' life under the command of the Imperial Prince, and he saw how he's far too advanced for his age. He had a good grasp on politics, on physics, the sciences of the world, but oddly enough is still lacking in the magical subjects.

This Warden is rarely privy to the Imperial Prince's thoughts, but he and Sam think similarly.

And Sam *knew* that Theseus is no dumb child.

Which begged the question: *what does he want from the Imperial Prince?*

He lingered with these thoughts from behind, watching as the youngest prince babbled to Technoblade about the peaks of his knowledge.

Sam saw Theseus fall . It had been on one of the days when the two brothers would walk together. Sam was watching them from behind, alongside Clara who was Theseus' assigned caretaker who had been handpicked by Puffy herself. There were only so many things that could be done in a walk in a garden and tea. Theseus is talkative but he could only talk about so much.

“Are you interested in the lake, Theseus?” Sam heard, and there's a distinct dread that rose from the bottom of his gut.

He looked beside him, and he saw Clara tense up. She knew, then, that there was something off with the lake. It must be the rumors, where all the spies had tried to escape. No one knows what's distinctly wrong about this lake other than himself and the Imperial Prince.

It was the Lotus. It attracts everything that isn't expecting to die. The Lotus was a creation of the Emperor, the true crown of the Empire. It had been a way to protect his family, and when the Emperor had been here it was said that he could control the lotuses with ease. Since he'd been gone, though, it's been killing things unconditionally.

This shouldn't exclude Theseus.

“Yes big brother!” Tommy answered. “I like boats, and the lake is pretty.”

Sam felt a distinct fear for something irrational. While watching Technoblade lift Theseus up to the boat, Sam had tried to assess the situation.

For one, reasonably thinking, if Theseus dies here and now, it would be a lot better for the Palace. There would be one less concern in the castle, and there would be no weak spots that people would target for. Theseus dying here rather than being killed would allow deniability

to those involved. An accident is an accident and no one could hold the Crown Prince accountable for an *accident* .

And for another, the more human part of Sam had screamed that *this is a child*.

Then he watched Theseus fall, and that latter part of his mind had dominated the rest. He could hear the splash. He could hear the desperate attempt to rise over the water, but Sam had known that the Lotus wouldn't allow survival unless there were certain conditions.

The Palace and by extension the Capital is Magic Locked. The only things that could hold magic are the Royal Family and those who the Royal Blood permits– the process of that is grueling, and while once Sam could easily summon Theseus back to his side to save him, he is incapable of it. The Lotuses are a special case in this matter, because the *Emperor* made these.

The Lotuses were conditional in its picking as well. Those that knew about death, so intimately, are immune to its siren song. It could go one way or another– a man who had been so used to being the harbinger of death would be so jaded that not even the allure of the Lotus could bring him to the water; a man who had been so acquainted with death that it had touched his cheek yet had mercifully refused his welcome. It's one of two, and Theseus was neither.

Which means that it should be infallible.

Sam hadn't known why he'd clenched his fists, seeing Technoblade stare at the child fighting for his life. He didn't know why he'd felt the odd sensation prickling at the back of his neck. The Enchantment was striking him, angered at the thoughts of defiance.

Technoblade was the judge, jury, and executioner, now he's decided Theseus' fate.

Turns out that Sam's verdict of there being another prince as a troublesome notion was correct in Technoblade's eyes. There's some form of regret.

Yet the most unbelievable thing had happened, nullifying Sam's newfound fear and his certainties.

Theseus had risen out of the water.

Clara, by his side, had been relieved to tears when she saw the easy-going smile on Theseus' face. Easily the assumption that comes should be relief– the prince is alive.

But this good news had come with an equally devastating revelation–

Had Theseus faced death before?

This devastation had clawed at Sam's heart. While it was true that Sam had wanted the vermin dead, he hadn't thought that there would be any attempts prior to this. To his knowledge, anything that draws to a blank had come from merely a *week ago* . Sam has had a week of monitoring his activity, and not once, even with his hostility, had Theseus been faced with his or the Imperial Prince's attempts.

Which means that any attempts that Theseus must have faced must have happened in the four years alone in the Ruby Palace.

While Sam had barked out orders for Theseus' comfort, to be surrounded by warmth after what must have been the cruel and cold embrace of those damned flowers, he had thought. His monochrome world shattered right then and there.

His disdain for this weak child had shifted into indignance. The realization that dawned had created sparks into his coding, as the Enchantment wraps its oath around Theseus fully.

His monochrome world was no more.

He'd accepted that.

Technoblade had called for an odd order, after that day. News arrived in the Emerald Palace that Theseus had been sick in the Sapphire palace, and this news was something that he'd told Technoblade immediately.

After the events of the day before, Technoblade had been odd. It's as if a shift had happened. Sam had thought that it is for the same reason he himself had changed his perception of Theseus for. Someone had attempted to kill this child before. Someone had actively tried, for no good reason, to *kill* this *child* . It's an odd and hypocritical devastation, because Sam had wanted to erase this kid himself.

He reasoned, in defense, that it had been for the good of the Empire. He never would wish for another political turmoil to rise from there being another prince to contest the already controversial Crown Prince. It had resulted in so many losses already.

But at the same time he knows that his hypocrisy cannot be comforted because whatever Theseus had gone through had likely been the result of that same mindset.

It's hard to remember, in the heat of politics, that a child is a *child* .

Technoblade doesn't let up, however, with a subtle sort of aggression. He seemed set to prove something, despite the fact that every action that he does had seemed menial, Sam seemed to understand that this one was prioritized over the dull meetings and the way that it's been imposed that the Empire's Northern Borders should be opened.

He released an odd set of orders, to be done with the highest priority. The first was to collect all the Lotus flowers from the Emerald Palace's garden, making sure that none of it were within the Emerald Palace's or Sapphire Palace's domain. He'd demanded that all the living flowers be sent to a pool, one that he'd locked away forever within the Palace. Sam hadn't known why, because he was certain that Technoblade's rather drastic set of actions had much to do as a response to Theseus but at the same time had very little to do with him.

And he'd demanded the maids to be prepared for departure. Sam watched the lower ranked servants pack their bags, close to tears. He hadn't understood why they were being sent away. Where did this order come from?

He'd ordered Sam to get the chefs of the palace to prepare something special, while Technoblade himself prepared something. Desserts with a special ingredient, none of which the chefs were allowed to taste or consume. Confections made with a mixture of something grounded gold and red, hidden in pastry delight.

The last odd order was for Sam, where he was to prepare for an assignment. It's not an infrequent thing, for the Imperial Prince to give him a sort of mission. It certainly isn't the first time that he'd been entrusted to with a delicate job that no one will live to tell the tale of save for him.

Except he hadn't specified what it would have been.

And that day, Theseus had returned. He looked to be a little worse for wear, drowsy in a concerning way. It was something that Sam couldn't help but feel concerned about.

He watched from a distance as the two conversed. Theseus was slow to respond, with an odd nasal voice that seemed less enjoyable than the chipper tone that he'd always speak with.

By the end of it, whatever Technoblade had prepared for tea had served pleasing to Theseus' taste, and had even alleviated whatever distressing expression Theseus wore. He looked a lot livelier, a lot less pale, even.

But he hadn't eaten a single thing that the palace chefs had prepared, which bugs Sam because surely whatever Technoblade had prepared would have been good for whatever ailment Tommy had.

He'd prepared to sneak one of them off the table to give to Theseus, but Technoblade seemed to understand what he was doing.

"That wouldn't be necessary, Warden." The Imperial Prince said without even looking at him, and immediately the ring of an Order echoed through his spine and he'd dropped the confection.

He was tempted to ask why, but it seemed that it wasn't necessary since the Prince had decided to indulge him.

"The tea was made of the lotus." He answered,

And that had confirmed Sam's suspicions.

Theseus had been near death before, prior to nearly drowning, prior to the past week or month. He had been so close to death once or more before that it had scarred the little kid for far too long. It is something that had shaped Theseus to be who he is today, and that thought is a devastating realization because how could something like that result in this sweet facade?

Because that's how the Lotus works. It's a juxtaposition of a situation, where it aims to kill those unfamiliar with death but it lives to soothe those who have been embraced by it. A gamble of a cure for some, and a roulette game of death for many.

That day, Sam had been relocated to serve the youngest prince, and all the servants of the Sapphire palace save for one had been replaced by the Emerald Palace's servants.

Theseus was introduced to them the day after, and Sam was holding the last Lotus that the Imperial Prince would ever bring out of the Emerald Palace ever again.

Theseus was kind. Sam knew that much when he'd watched the child interact with these people. He hadn't known these people, but he had given them such an odd amount of respect that Sam couldn't help but think that maybe this amicable facade hadn't been purely from Theseus himself. He doesn't believe in Nature. In the grand scheme of things, a child is molded by nurturing, and this includes the influence of both soft and harsh raising and attention.

Sam would love to question it, but he is to stick by Theseus' side. He wouldn't have enough time to interrogate the servants who had been exiled to the outskirts of the South, where the most grueling environment blows harsh winds of ice and hail, and without the support of the Empire, is near unlivable.

He would know. He was once native to that area.

He would also know that those with skin thinner than his wouldn't survive a single week out there. Sam himself barely did.

Sam had kept a close eye on everyone, while keeping this warm facade when faced by Theseus. He would look at every single oddity of the castle, serving as the judge, jury and executioner for whatever happens in the palace.

Through the days with which Sam had been by Theseus' side, he can't help the odd feeling that sprouts in his chest when he sees the child. It's so foreign in his monochrome view that it's odd to see something so fragile be so important to him.

"Will you call me Tommy instead?" Theseus had asked in one of those days.

"I'm afraid not, Your Highness," Sam said in what he'd hoped is the warmest tone he could muster. It's not hard to believe that this man was a slayer of many, based on how many children he'd accidentally frightened during his missions. He has an intimidating nature and an equally intimidating voice. He wouldn't blame Theseus for being so frightened of him. It's in his nature, after all, with his reputation as the Warden.

Theseus didn't seem phased, however. He wonders if Tommy was ever frightened of him. For once, he genuinely did not hope for it. "Well, that's sad." Theseus says. "I'll call you Sam,

though. Is that alright?" He does that adorable tilt of his head and Sam is gone for.

Sam found it hard to transition from this obligatory form of respect into this genuine loyalty, but it happened gradually and slowly, until inside his head he'd forget sometimes that he is supposed to call Tommy by his honorifics. Sometimes he'd slipped, and no one would comment.

Leave it to Tommy to enable this casual nature.

He can't help but think so fondly about it.

The Warden escorts Tommy everywhere in the Sapphire Palace, keeping a watchful eye on the prince as often as he can. He watches when he offers the gardeners some flowers he'd plucked from his own garden, and he witnessed every moment when Tommy had offered these odd paper sculptures that he'd do on his free time. Sam himself has one of them, which was a box that could change into a rose. Tommy had taken the time to fold green paper for him, says it matches him.

"Flowers aren't usually green," Sam reasoned.

"Well good thing it's paper then, innit?" Tommy answers back.

And on the days when Tommy's attention was called by the Imperial Prince, Sam had been the one to bring him to and from. Clara's an infrequent appearance due to the workload of hers having been increased, from a mere servant to the one in charge of Tommy's education, meals, clothing, and budget. Despite all of these having been assigned to her, Sam had taken the opportunity to double check to see if this maid was doing her job.

Thankfully, she is. Otherwise Tommy would be losing someone he was attached to and Sam would hate to be the bearer of bad news.

Admittedly, in the beginning, Sam had no idea how to deal with a child. He'd assumed that what they lacked in size, they'd made up with in energy. He was wrong about that when he and Tommy were on the way back to the Sapphire Palace.

"Hey, Sammie," Tommy tugs at Sam's pant leg. Sam, on the other hand, is shocked as to how he didn't notice the kid get there. "Can you carry me? I'm a little tired." He says drowsily, rubbing his eye while he looks up at Sam. It's only then when he'd realized how small Tommy really is.

And Sam feels something a lot more visceral than the Enchantment claw at his chest.

It's in there, now, bothering him and wrapping his organs in a grip-like fashion, unyielding.

While feeling that odd sensation, an attachment so similar yet a lot more effective than the comparatively more superficial Enchantment, Sam wordlessly lifted Tommy into his arms, holding him tight so that he doesn't fall. Reasonably, he didn't have to. All he has to do is support Tommy's weight,

But an odd sensation, much like an Order, grips at him and pulls him so that he hugs Tommy while the kid drowns off on his shoulder.

He will protect this child forever.

So he kept a closer eye on everything. Paranoid at every misplaced object and every servant out of place. It's different, with Tommy. He's different from who he'd served previously. At least the Imperial Prince was terrifying in his own right. He doesn't need Sam, he didn't need anyone, really. Tommy is different. He's small, impressionable, and he doesn't know what should and shouldn't. He could see impunity and he'd think that it was a silly thing.

Sam despises that.

But what can he do about it other than to correct every crease there is?

Tommy, though, had been displeased with his methods. The first time he'd attempted to actually dismiss one of the gardeners, Tommy had shown them mercy by pulling Sam away and making him swear not to ever remove them from their jobs unless they wished.

"Pinky promise it." Tommy had said, and mindlessly Sam had interlaced his own pinky with Tommy's.

Except that had been a mistake, because at the act of this promise Sam felt the twinge of the Order peck at his neck. The princeling had done it again, it mustn't have been a coincidence. The young prince doesn't even know the amount of power he has in a pinky.

So he'd let it be known: *Fear the young prince, for he has more power in his pinky than you and your entire family.* He had displayed his loyalty in front of everyone, and he watched with satisfaction when everyone bowed their heads in fear. Every glare, all without the purpose of harm, as per the order.

But this can't work for everyone.

He keeps a keen eye on Dream, on every interaction of his. Dream has been a thorn on the Imperial Prince's side since he'd been making pleas and requested meetings for the sake of the North. He had been presenting plans of architecture related with the redstone mechanics and advanced enchantments for a preparation for a potential opening of the borders that Technoblade had so clearly said would never happen.

Charming, Dream is. He knows how to go around words, using them as tools with a fast wit as if wielding a sword.

Which is to say, he doesn't trust this friendship that had been established between the two. He doesn't trust *Dream* to be specific. There is nothing to distrust Theseus of save for the innocence that he wishes to preserve.

It's inevitable to think that this child would be used.

Sam will not allow that.

So he decided that maybe Dream has a little too much time on his hands to be visiting Tommy as often as he does.

In an attempt to fix this, Sam had requested a temporary leave of absence. He'd prepared for it, days prior. He'd listed things to do, and the events that would happen in that one day he'd be gone from Theseus' side. He'd rushed out of the Capital in a day, and once he's out of the reach of the Magic Lock, Sam had harnessed magic of the Wizard Tower's Pearls and did what he had to do.

He had laid down his distractions, something for the North to focus on rather than spend its free time influencing the Youngest Prince. All the while he felt the Enchantment tingling down his neck, feeling the certainty that whatever his doing would have been unpleasant to the beliefs of either of the princes that he'd bounded an Oath to.

It was all light though.

Sam had done things that people wouldn't blink twice at. He didn't kill a single person, which is a lot to say about his restraint in stirring the necessary chaos. He'd messed up the papers, collected and sent libel and blackmail, planting the seeds of minor turmoil in the North amongst the smaller Nobles.

He'd also placed tips on the wrongs that needed correcting, placed them in an anonymous postbox to be sent to the Duke's palace at once. Things require Dream's attention, there are rumors of a coup within the territory, there are some villages lacking in their needs. The list is made endless enough that he would have a difficult time inserting these visits in between.

And somewhere, in that time, he had to sneak into Dream's manor.

It was innocent, at first. He had given Foolish, the Duke, ample instructions on what to fix with the North's current state of affairs. He'd aligned a postbox there. But for Dream, he decided that maybe it would be better to visit personally for the sake of *collecting* blackmail.

The manor was a humble thing. There's a stable in the back, a few rooms and cabinet rooms, some banquet halls and one grand staircase.

Sam had dug, but all he's seen were correspondences with a stranger named Four. There's nothing particularly incriminating about it, when he first read it, but he's convinced that there had to be something underneath it. Code, *anything* . So he commits these letter correspondences into memory before moving on.

It's not until a bit later on when he figured out from the contexts and the stories and the tales, of *who* exactly these correspondences were given to.

When he'd left, he'd made the wrong mistake to stir one of the horses in the stable awake. He huffs, and he starts whinnying and stomping, He'd kicked at the back of the stable to attract

attention. What kind of horse is this!?

Sam could run, but anywhere to hide away from sight would either trap him into this stable or would require another Pearl. He doesn't have enough pearls. He couldn't be found, not when he had such a vital piece of information that the Imperial Prince had ought to know.

The night is not nearly crowded enough for this to go unheard.

So he did what he had to do, and left.

When Sam returned, everything had been normal. Nothing had changed in his absence, thankfully. He'd had a few days worth of peace, until one day Tommy had been the one to approach him. "Will you bring me to brother's place?" Tommy had initiated one day, and Sam had felt this distinct awe with that. Tommy had never been one to initiate a meeting with his brother, and while it doesn't seem unusual, it just comforts Sam to know that Tommy would reach out to his blood brother whenever he pleases.

It would have been so much unlike the past four years, whatever those servants had lacked with.

"What are you so happy about?" Tommy asked while they walked.

"I'm just happy that you're getting along well with your brother, The Imperial Prince Technoblade." He says, eyes crinkling. And it was true. He was glad, because finally Theseus is getting the attention he deserves and trusting the people that deserves it.

He felt especially elated when he responded with. "I love my brother! Of course I'd get along well with him!" Even more so when it seemed like the little kid was so excited about the thought of it, that he'd tightened his grip around Sam.

A part of his Enchantment is pleased at the thought of his service. More family, more blood of the Royals. "That's true," he recalls the time before Tommy, frowning. He was sure though that Tommy was unable to actually witness him. The monochrome world, is what Sam liked to call it. A world without the complexities of emotion. Everything was objective to him. Sam hadn't been there, when William had been alive, but he's heard the grief, and he's witnessed the downward slope from irrational feeling to cold apathy. "Your brother has been very lonely, before you came into his life."

And Tommy, the sweetest thing, responded: "Why's he lonely? He could always visit me, you know!"

That should have been the case. That should have been the case four years ago, when Theseus was reported to have been brought home to the palace. But that couldn't be. It had been so easy to neglect, but to see the consequences of it is heartwrenching.

All for the sake of mourning.

“He carries a burden.” Is all Sam says.

“Is that why he didn’t see Tommy until now?”

Sam understands, then, that Tommy has some form of realization in those four years. He had been neglected. Tommy had known that yet he had remained so kind and so... *this*. What had happened? “I...” He’s a hypocrite, but he can’t be the one to answer this. “I don’t think I’m the right person to answer that.” Sam says instead.

“That’s okay! What matters is that Brotherblade likes me now!”

The *now*, lingers at his head, poking incessantly at his Enchantment.

Sam stands in full attention, hands behind his back and shoulders straight. He stares right ahead, feeling the Enchantment bind at him in full. A good distance from him is the Imperial Prince.

Just earlier he’d watched Tommy walk away waving at him. He looked to be as confused as Sam was when he’d been called to attention, the Order pulling him like a leash. The two had come from the internal agricultural garden within the Emerald Palace.

“What’s this I hear of the *mess* up North?” Technoblade questions, and Sam can’t see him because he’s locked in position.

Sam had honestly hoped that Technoblade would sum this up as yet another mess up by the Northern Duke, but it looks like he’d slipped somewhere.

The Order is strict on his tongue, though, so Sam answered honestly. “I had suspicions that the younger brother of Duke Foolish had decided to influence Prince Theseus.” He said.

“*Suspicion?*” Technoblade questioned with a displeased tone. “You had *suspicions*.” He repeated, as if he couldn’t believe the amount of disappointment this answer had brought up. “Warden, I believe I’ve trained you well enough not to act on mere *guesses*, seeing that most the actions you’ve pulled today had consequences that *suspicion* alone cannot ever atone for.” Technoblade hisses, and Sam could hear the clacking of his boots against the marble floor.

“Forgive me, Your Imperial Highness.” Sam had said in monotone with insincerity. He did not ever regret his actions. Not once, none at all.

“You don’t seem to be very sorry.” Technoblade questions. “Is there a reason for that?”

Sam feels the Enchantment loosen, and the soreness of his body from standing still for a long period of time had revealed itself when the Enchantment had slightly let go of its vice-like grip. “I found out about the reason why the North had wanted to open its borders.” Sam

answers, but he lowers his eyes shamefully, “But it’s not enough evidence to condemn them.”

That much, at least, had pleased Technoblade.

But as an odd form of punishment, one that he’d never thought Technoblade would consider as one, he’d been removed from Tommy’s side and often sent away for missions that concerned his ‘suspicion’. Sam doesn’t know if this was a punishment.

Though he had an inkling that maybe the Imperial Prince had realized about the Enchantment and how it had formed to attach to Theseus.

For a while, Sam was afraid. It had been in one of the rare times he was located at the palace for a pending mission. Sam had full loyalty towards the Imperial Prince but he can’t fully trust him not to do the same thing he did when Tommy had fallen into the water. So in the brief moments in which he could come back, he was glad. He’d been glad, for such a brief moment, to see the young prince again.

In the garden, which he had started to believe was cursed against Tommy.

For the second time, he’d witnessed Theseus fall. Sam had been startled, his enchantments are sent into some sort of flux, twisting and churning into multiple demands that haven’t been spoken. He looked up, and with his mind’s eye he sees something curling around Theseus, whips of magic wildly curling around like a whip, cracking at every surface it can. He sees shades. Visions. There is an arrow on his shoulder, a blade at his chest, there’s a dagger at his heart and a cut across his throat. There’s a bleeding down his temple and a sword through his gut.

Visions flickering from one scene to another, and Sam couldn’t bear to witness these gruesome sights.

But with his own eyes, he witnesses Tommy cough blood. That is all. That’s the supposed reality.

But Sam’s Enchantment had known much more, his Loyalty is omniscient towards those he requires to Ward.

When Tommy fell, Sam felt his Enchantment flicker erratically. It pulled him apart, like the sensation of multiple Orders having been accomplished and denied had rang at his neck and down his spine. It was torment.

When he falls, he at least sees Tommy in Technoblade’s arms.

Tommy had been asleep for a day, and a day turned into a week, and a week turned into two until Sam lost count. He could stand, but that ringing sensation through his Enchantment had

echoed in his bones, rendering him weak but strong enough to at least do the basic necessities. He should have let Technoblade know, but everyone within witnessing distance could see how distraught the once apathetic Imperial Prince was at every second that Tommy wouldn't open his eyes.

He'd heard rumors, at least, that he'd blink every now and then, and he'd hear from the chambers the echoes of his screams in the rare moments he'd wake up in those devastating days.

Mages flooded in the palace and down into the stronghold, held in cages where not even the Wizard Tower's immunity for the Capital's Lock is able to seep through. He'd heard rumors that Tommy had been the one to beg, in his most hurt moments, to not harm them.

Rumors had spread more of how kind this little prince was.

Meanwhile Sam had only wanted his little prince to live.

By the time Tommy woke up again, things had Changed. The palace' atmosphere had been a lot lighter than he'd realized, after the distress that seemed to drag everyone down upon the news of the little prince's ailment. Sam's mission had been given some leeway, with shorter days away from the palace and longer intervals in between.

Sam watched the people greet him with glee.

Technoblade had been... different.

It was hard to notice, but as a person who had the Enchantment bound around the two Princes it was something only he could possibly see. His eyes, mainly had been the keystone of this change save for the uncanny change in disposition. What should have been sharp, near glaring, blinding ruby eyes had been a lot softer. Faded, even, as if whatever magic that had been there had turned docile.

While his criteria for his rule stays the same, the ruling had been different. It was not an unwelcome change, to be honest it's a rather welcome one. *Too* welcome. Everyone, every noble who could get their hands on the opportunity to be granted an audience from The Imperial Prince had tried at whatever leeway they could afford. He had been... a lot more patient, and the rumors had spread since then.

Schlatt had been one of the common irritants. A growing irritation in the palace ever since rumors of Tommy must have leaked when Technoblade had outsourced the mages.

Everywhere, outside the palace, had been shocked at the news of the Third Prince Theseus's existence. They were *loud*, excessively so. There had been a vast influx of letters to every courtier known to be working in the palace who had sworn Theseus' existence to secrecy. All of which had been rerouted to Technoblade.

It isn't pretty outside.

“Your Imperial Highness.” Sam had asked one day while escorting Technoblade to the throne hall prior to having to receive another day’s worth of Nobles hoping to catch a glimpse of Tommy.

When he’d been acknowledged Sam, only then did he proceed. “Did something happen when Prince Theseus fell ill?”

Technoblade turned his head to glance at Sam, but briefly looked forward again. His strides had been shorter, though, as if willing to prolong the conversation. “I had to take something from him, and I had to give something away.” He said, and Sam had understood it.

Because it wasn’t only Technoblade who seemed to have something missing or new. It was also Tommy.

And he *felt* it.

“Had that changed anything?” Sam questions.

Technoblade’s fingers twitched slightly, and for once in so long Sam had seen Technoblade be vulnerable. “I hope it won’t.” He said,

And if Sam had dared to look at Technoblade’s eyes, he would see the particular fear and melancholy of acceptance. Something like the knowledge that something inevitable would happen.

Routine had made it progress. In the mornings Tommy would greet Technoblade, and he’d go to his tutoring sessions. In those hours of the day Technoblade would attend meeting after meeting for every noble with false and true concerns.

“There’s been a coup in the south.” Schlatt had mentioned. “And while I’ve dealt with it, it’s concerning the question on your title as Heir.”

“There have been demands to open the Northern Borders.” Foolish had reported. “I have been trying as hard as I can to look for why they got so incredibly loud about it but I have received no such news on the matter as of late.”

“There are some notable Vassals who haven’t been treating their people right in the East.” The duke of the East, Nikki, had told him. “None of them would listen to me, and any punishment I try to serve has been overruled. They would listen to no one but you.”

“I have had to move soldiers to and fro the borders, frantically.” Captain Puffy reports. “Something’s amiss.”

They didn’t need to explicitly say what’s happening. The palace had already known. Incompetencies and mutiny had risen with the rumors that Technoblade had no longer the absolute authority as the *only* potential heir to the throne. By the demands of the people he could easily be removed.

They were all so daring.

It had, slowly, and surely, creeping like fate on the back of someone who had long accepted it. The rumors had begun to rise, the threat on the palace had pulled its weight.

All the while, Tommy is none the wiser.

And the two who had tried to protect Tommy had been relieved of that. Their lives had been a lot calmer, without the ruckus of having to deal with the mess that is Politics. So relieved, in fact, that Technoblade had trusted that he could leave the palace without having to worry about the young prince or anyone who might decide a repeat of what happened with the second prince.

It was a long time coming, where Technoblade himself had to leave the palace himself to deal with the disruptions in the system. A cleanse in the organization and hierarchy of nobility to ensure that they're doing their actual jobs. The Imperial Prince had other concerns, for the past three years.

Perhaps the dukes had known that. All of them would have sensed the need for the intervention of the Imperial Prince himself. They had been far too lax with their discipline as of late.

And somehow that does not exclude the dukes themselves.

Technoblade had called for the Duke of the South, just a few days prior to the agreed departure from the palace.

He'd arrived, but with that same cocky look on his face. Techno stares Schlatt down. "So you have been meeting with me frequently, Duke Schlatt of the South." Technoblade says, eyes staring down at him like daggers raining from the heavens, down to a cocky man. "And you haven't once thought to mention the *adjustment* you've done to my brother's education?"

Schlatt stares up. There is no sign of defiance, nor is there even a hint of fear. He is neutral, *glad* even. "I haven't adjusted anything, Your Imperial Highness." Schlatt says in a matter of fact. "I had merely recommended a few names, and it just so happens that the one in charge of your kid's education had picked William."

"And his, as I've heard, *stay* within Imperial Family grounds?"

"In light of that, since William has no affiliation with Magic, he couldn't so casually attend his classes without being so unacceptably late. So I'd requested a room in the Sapphire palace, as per the standard operation procedure for situations like these." He tilts his head, and it's almost mocking if not for the innocent look he had on his face. "That had been the purpose of the Sapphire palace, is it not? For *guests* of the Imperial Family?"

That was a hard blow. Neither of them can confirm that Schlatt knows of anything regarding Tommy's previous situation, so they cannot act on the mere implication of impudence, but

both of them had *known* what had been so terribly wrong with the fact that he'd spent six years in that place.

It was demeaning.

And it hadn't even been on purpose.

Sam doesn't know which was worse.

"You know how much I detest unwarranted nepotism."

"And it's not nepotism," Schlatt answers. "I have nothing to gain from recommending my kid's tutor. I just saw the potential that guy could carve, and saw it fit for the prince instead of my son." Schlatt gives a smile, something sly and knowing. Sam hates it, and he doesn't understand why Technoblade keeps him around when he could always land an order to have him struck. "Is there anything else, Your Imperial Highness?"

"Dismissed." Technoblade grits.

He watches as Schlatt takes his time to walk out, and finds immense satisfaction in seeing the door shut.

Now that Technoblade is alone with Sam, the noble audience has been dismissed, the Imperial Prince has crossed his legs, and leaned back against the throne. Sam looked up at the prince, and he saw him deep in thought.

"Warden." Technoblade calls for his attention. "I have to depart for a few meetings in the East, so I am unable to meet this new *tutor*." His grip against his own fist tightens. "You are to stay by Tommy's side for the time that I am gone. I will deal with this when I return. Is that understood?"

He looks at Sam, and Sam feels the echo of what used to be such a sharp glare.

Sam straightens his back, and he feels something light settle on his skin. A frequent sensation, an enchantment of Loyalty carved into his being. "I understand, Your Imperial Highness." He says with a bow and four fingers flat on his chest.

"And that tutor Schlatt put in," He could feel Technoblade's eyes on him, and despite the lack of the enchantment this time, Sam could feel the authority ringing in his voice and through his head. "Keep an eye on him."

Something is off, with William Soot. Sam had trailed Tommy like he did when Tommy was four, and while he was grateful for the opportunity to be able to do this again, he was also rather conflicted because there was something inherently *wrong* about him. Sam doesn't understand where it's coming from.

But he hasn't been wrong with his intuition yet.

So he watches. He watches every interaction outside the classroom, watches as Wilbur and Tommy walk out together and chatter while Sam trails from behind. He is amicable, he can give him that, but he's Schlatt's Ward, or at least his father's ward. Wilbur isn't to be trusted. While the Dukes of the South work well in serving their purpose, they have always been of the opinion that gaining more power would mean better for the economy.

And better for their pockets.

"And that thing with the religious system of Levin! That's so cool!" Tommy says, clearly elated.

"Right!?" Wilbur says equally as excited. Sam is doubting that he should be old enough to even teach Theseus but based on the two's conversation, he seems to be a challenging enough teacher for Tommy's level of intelligence. He can't help the feeling of pride that arises in his chest when he remembers how ahead Tommy is in his education. While Sam had been considered talented in the field of science, he had also been stunted in his education when he had been young. The situation in the neighboring country had been unfavorable to people like him who people wanted to weaponize.

He was grateful for the Imperial Prince in that regard.

Sam mostly ignores whatever is being spoken about. As it is, the things that Wilbur seemed to teach Wilbur are things that are neutral. He isn't biased in what he talks about, and Sam is relieved about that much.

But something he finds especially odd is that *look* he gives the little prince. It's something so adoring, something that doesn't quite fit the narrative of someone who had only recently met him. While it's true that it's so easy to love the adorable prince, it can't have been to that extent.

Sam notes that as something. Material against Wilbur in the situation that any harm comes to Tommy.

"Sam?" Tommy calls, and his attention is brought back to the little prince.

"Yes?"

Tommy tilts his head, staring at Sam as if he's reading something particularly complex. "Let's go?"

Only then did he notice that Wilbur's already left. They're at the exit of that wing of the palace where Tommy takes his tutoring lessons. Had he been that deep in thought?

He shakes his head. He must be tired. "Of course." Sam says with a smile. Tommy grins back, and he immediately takes Sam's hand.

Sam smiles at Tommy.

He has to do everything in his power to protect him. He has to, or the Enchantment won't be the only thing dooming him.

Tommy is with Technoblade, greeting him goodbye when he departs. Just earlier prior to this Tommy had spent some of his time in the morning with Ranboo , the playmate of the little prince . It's astounding how the youth of this generation are so talented. To think a child would have been what saved Tommy from whatever happened when he fell ill. Sam couldn't find anything wrong with that child and it seems that Technoblade has him in his good graces already.

But *Wilbur* isn't.

And Sam has a distinct feeling about it and he can't help but have the need to keep an eye on him.

He's of the South, related to Schlatt for reasons no one knows yet because he was known to be an orphan from the East who the previous Duke picked up and raised alongside his son, J. Schlatt. He's also uncannily smart, but it's nothing to gawk at in comparison to Tommy who seems to be on the same level of intellect as most of his tutors the past years.

That is no good reason why Sam should like him, though.

"William Soot." Sam calls for him in his office, which was Tommy's tutoring quarters.

He had been looking through the window for some reason when he had been called. William looks up to see who it was that called him. "Oh, hello Sir Sam." Wilbur greets politely. He bows his head, two fingers on his chest. "To what do I owe the pleasure?" He asks.

"What is your aim here?" Sam asks him immediately. Wilbur looked shocked, as if he didn't expect such a blatant confrontation. "It would do both of us better if you were honest with me because while I can tolerate meaningless ploys, it would be detrimental to how the palace runs if I do not know what your motives are."

Wilbur shakes his head. "I don't have a goal, Sir--"

"Forgive me if I fail to believe that." Sam confronts. "It's all timed too well, isn't it? Months after the rumors spread like wildfire, of the Prince who could take over Technoblade, right when the Imperial Prince has to depart, leaving little Theseus alone and impressionable in the palace." He speaks on, letting venom seep through his voice and into Wilbur's conscious. "Forgive me, if I suspect that you intend to do *something* ."

He blinks. "It really just so happens that I had received a letter on Theseus' acceptance of my tutelage." He says, and he sounds so honest. Sam hates people like these. Liars who lie so well, so convincingly. He would really rather deal with Schlatt who lies so blatantly but no one can prove how.

This man is dangerous because there's no need for proof at all.

"Look at me, straight in the eyes, while I tell you what you plan to do, hm?" Sam says.

Because Sam *knows* .

"You are an influence on Theseus' mind, and for the next month, while you've already have some sort of hold on his high opinion—"

"No." He doesn't bend, but that's okay. He seems like a tenacious liar anyway and Sam could deal with that.

"You intend to tell him of the potentials, of things that the Imperial Prince does wrong that he could do right. You want *change* , you're that type of person—"

"Listen, please, I *don't* ." There's a crack in his voice, and he feels like he's rightfully bringing out the truth.

"And as you are your wishes are highly likely to align with literally every person out there striving for *power*- "

"I really, really do *not* ." The lie will fall. Sam will simply *watch* .

" *You want a repeat of what happened with the Second Prince.* "

" ***I want none of it!*** " Wilbur shouts, and suddenly there's a wave of *something* that shuts Sam up. "I want nothing of what you said, nothing of what you're *implying* ." Wilbur hisses, his voice eerily stable but so powerful with his words wrapping around like iron around the truth. "How fucking *dare you* to assume such heinous things of me, I fucking despise you for this." His words are sharp, and the meek tone he'd taken on prior had long disappeared past the blades of his tongue. "And for what you've said, you are *horribly horribly* mistaken because I've *been out there* , and if anything, it's not *Technoblade* in danger. It's *Theseus* !" There is a toxic verity in his voice, as if whatever he's saying is what he strongly believes is genuine.

Sam wants to interject, but his mouth stays shut as Wilbur speaks on.

"And I want no part of a *repetition* for what happened to the Second fucking Prince, I want nothing so *so* cruel to tear a man away from his family!" He shouts, and he slams the windowsill. There is a crack in the wood, and it should hurt but he keeps on going. "And you are wrong to say that that event had taken the Second Prince, because if you *studied your history correctly* , you would perhaps have known that the Imperial Prince Technoblade was *never* the First Prince.

"He is, and had always been, *the Second* ." His eyes are blazing, and Sam sees his eyes flicker under the light. Crystals for one second, and almond for the next.

Wilbur takes a moment to breathe, taking a few steps back. His eyes are wide with a dawning realization of what he'd just said.

The things that Sam could hold against him. “Please,” Wilbur begs, knowing that he’d ruined himself. “I want *nothing* , but to live my life. Is that so fucking much to ask?” He sounds broken, but Sam has no patience for broken men if it meant that what was left of the Royal Family he serves were to perish.

Sam says nothing, not that he could, and not that he needed to .

He’s gotten everything he needs.

So he goes to pick up Tommy from the place where the Imperial Prince is to depart from.

It was a tough secret to hold. He had planned to tell Technoblade before acting for the sake of Tommy, but it’s become increasingly hard to restrain himself when he sees Tommy act so amicably before the man who he had confirmed to be a traitor.

Sam knows that belief. The rumor, deep underground where no one speaks, that Technoblade had never truly been declared Crown Prince. That he was the Second twin. He also knows that belief to be false, because who else other than Technoblade could be so deserving of that role? This rumor stems from propaganda. This rumor stems from *the rebellion* .

So it’s become intolerable how he just watches as such a plastic, false man acts so happy around Tommy.

Which is why he stops, one day while carrying Tommy back to his room after a long day. He lets the confused Tommy down on his feet, while Sam kneels before him to look at him eye-to-eye. “My prince, it would really, truly do you well if you were to avoid William Soot from now on.” Sam resorted to actually telling Tommy.

Tommy, as he expected, looked very befuddled by the suggestion. “I don’t understand.”

“I have reason and been witness to the fact that Wilbur is not a very good man.” He explains, holding Tommy by his arms to give him some sort of support. Someone he believed to be his friend is likely to be a traitor, with a belief that Technoblade is not for the throne. “He’s using you, he’s using you to hurt so many people.”

He shakes his head. “That can’t be true—”

“It really is, Your Highness, because he’s told me when he got mad.”

“People say mean things when they’re mad all the time! It doesn’t mean that—”

“Please believe me—”

“NO!” Tommy pulls his arms away from Sam’s grasp, and he pushes Sam who had already been in an unstable position. Sam falls to the floor, shocked at the young prince’s insistence.

“You don’t have proof! You can’t tell me that he’s mean when you haven’t even told me *why*!”

Sam stands, and he really, *genuinely* tries to be as gentle with the news as he can but Tommy is distraught and he needs something. “Okay, okay, I’ll tell you, alright?”

“You’d be lying then!”

“I won’t lie,” Sam says. “I promise.”

So he tells Tommy, the truth and the whole truth just as he would have to Technoblade. He tells Tommy of why he thinks Wilbur suspicious, why he believes that he surely can’t be so innocent in his motives.

And Tommy is not convinced. “Those are fallacies.” He says, and Sam is honestly shocked at that level of vocabulary but was grounded by the fact that yeah, *Tommy is a genius*. This has to mean that whatever this reaction is is something reasonable.

But he’s also a kid, and a kid, no matter how smart, is still so impressionable.

“It’s true.”

“You’re blinded by the inconsistencies!” Tommy reasons. “You can’t say he’s a traitor with all of those things you told me!”

Sam gives Tommy a look, one that tells Tommy that no, he will not be convinced otherwise.

And perhaps this transparency was his downfall, because the little prince deflates into something that’s not quite acceptance. It’s something akin to *giving up*.

“I really don’t want to have Wilbur get hurt.” Tommy says, and he looks so upset by the notion that it can’t help but tug on Sam’s heartstrings. He almost wants to let the issue go, since he has no solid evidence other than this distinct *feeling*.

Sam shakes his head. “I’m sorry, Prince Tommy, but I have to tell Technoblade about this.” He says, “I can’t let this suspicion slide because this concerns your safety—”

“Like you hurt Spirit?” Tommy cuts,

And Sam sputters. Spirit?

From four years ago?

A *horse* from four years back?

“I’m afraid I don’t understand,” Sam lies, and he feels a pinch at his neck. “I remember you telling me about Spirit, Dream’s steed, but—”

Tommy shakes his head, “No, I just *know* that you hurt that poor horsie,” He says, and there’s this look on his face that is foreign on the kid’s face. “I know, okay? The things you’ve done

in the North aren't so subtle." He sounds so determined, "You hurt people for so many wrong reasons."

And Sam is obligated to believe that he really does know. He doesn't dare ask how.

"I won't hurt Wilbur." Sam lies again. "Nothing bad will happen to him."

Tommy looks at Sam, *really* looks at him, dead straight in the eyes.

And his eyes, blue sapphire eyes, look so much like Technoblade's when he is particularly upset— and Technoblade had *hated* liars.

Tommy goes red, as if he held his breath in some sort of bottled-up anger. "But you will!" Tommy says in a confrontational, angry tone. He sounds so frustrated, and all Sam could think is that *he doesn't deserve to ever sound like this*. "I know you! You'll hurt him just like you hurt my servants, like Spirit, my gardeners, and you'll hurt him because of *me*, and you'll believe that the entire time that what you're doing is *right* and I really *really hate* it!"

Hate.

It's supposed to be something so lighthearted, for some words like this to come from a child. After all, the only time Tommy's really ever said anything about hating something was with the rugs. It had been funny. A fond memory for himself to look back on, really.

But this was something he's done, or worse, something Tommy had *expected* him to do. The implication of that had hurt.

For a moment he was speechless, and Tommy must have taken that as an opportunity to speak more on what he's feeling about it. "I don't want you hurting people! I don't want you hurting anyone! Not for me, *especially* not for me." He sounds so distraught that Sam wonders why. Isn't he supposed to be happy, to be glad that someone would go this far for him?

"I am sorry," Sam says, trying to rein in his emotions. "I hadn't known you felt that way."

Tommy frowns, and it's not like his adorable pouts, at the verge, and as if all his anger wanted to flood out his body, his tears started to pour out. "I don't want people to hurt!" Tommy wails,

And empathy finally struck Sam.

It all goes back to the Lotus flowers, how Tommy must have been so hurt before. Sam realizes that maybe he's kind because he understood how it felt to be on the receiving end of all this pain. Having things be taken away from you, being threatened to be removed, being *hurt*. Sam could only wish he'd enforced a worse punishment on Tommy's first set of servants.

They're all likely dead anyway, so he could get satisfaction out of that.

“Hey, hey, Toms,” Sam gave in, letting himself use Tommy’s nickname. He kneels in front of Tommy so that he’s at his height. He wipes the tears off of his face but it keeps on going anyway. “I won’t do anything to Wilbur okay? No one is going to do anything to Wilbur.” He lies. “I promise, no one is going to hurt. Especially not you.”

This placates his crying a little, watching Tommy wipe his own eyes alongside Sam’s hands. He looks up at Sam with a doubtful expression. “Really?” yet his tone sounds hopeful.

“Really.” Sam says,

Tommy raises a pinky finger, and Sam wonders what it is.

“Pinky promise it to me.” Tommy says, “Then I’ll know if you ever break it.”

Sam tilts his head. Oh, that’s why it’s familiar. It’s a childish game where promises are made under the trust of a ritual. Crossing pinkies. So in order to placate Tommy, Sam complies. He wraps his large pinky around Tommy’s startlingly smaller ones, and smiles a placating smile.

“Promise.”

At his word, the Enchantment cuffs him. Suddenly all his plans of intervening had been shut down by the chains of the magic that binds this palace. He feels a jolt at his joints, tightening Sam blinks, realizing what had just happened.

And Tommy seems none the wiser, still wiping his tears as if he hasn’t activated an Order.

It was unintentional. It looks to be *entirely* unintentional, but here Sam is, unable to even *think* of uttering a word to Technoblade about this.

“Will you carry me to my room?” Tommy asks, looking up at Sam with a sleepy expression. The crying must have made his eyes swell, tiring the little boy. This cuts off Sam’s train of thought, and he’s filled with an awe. How could something like this be so unintentionally strong?

“Of course, Tommy.” Sam says, and he carries Tommy and places his head on the crook of his neck. He begins to walk forth, quietly.

The walk was peaceful. There was none of that tense atmosphere that had built up prior to what happened earlier. It was peaceful, finally, and Sam is grateful that at least now he understands why.

“Sam?” Tommy asks, and Sam hums in response. “I’m sorry.” He says.

Sam feels a dread in his heart. Why is he apologizing? “What for?” He dared to ask.

“I shouted at you.” There’s so much guilt in that voice that he couldn’t help but feel the twist at his chest. He never ever deserves to sound like this.

The Warden rubs Tommy’s back soothingly. “Hey, it’s okay.” He says. “You don’t need to apologize, I understand why you got upset.” This poor little prince, he must have gone

through so much in those four years. He's at least grateful that Puffy had been the one to take care of his basic necessities up til he was four years of age. The thought of Puffy not being there to protect him has him antsy.

"Still, I shouted."

"And that's because I didn't listen, didn't I?" He chuckles, "You wanted to be heard, and I wasn't listening. It's only right for you to shout when I'm being mean."

Tommy is quiet for a bit, as if considering his words. "You were a bit mean." He admits, and finally Sam lets out a laugh.

Maybe he'll go find *other ways* to properly serve this prince, since apparently his experience with the eldest one is no good.

Chapter End Notes

Art in the beginning, in order, are by Potato Bandit and Inggi!

NO idea why I called it horse head interlude when currently the effects of Sam's interference is still rather unrevealed at this point in time.

IT'S A WHOPPING 12K+ OF WORDS FUCKING HELL /LH

Oh, also, if you see any inconsistencies in characterization that's purposefully intended because I intend to write this entire thing under the safety of my Unreliable-Narrator blanket

Anyway! As always, come join the discord server I co-own with Vil (Cnthus) and Piper (PipertheViper)!!! [Join the Garden](#). Sip some tea with us, why don't you? :D

Crimes, Boys, Crimeboys

Chapter Summary

Half an update KEKW

Chapter Notes

HI HELLO OK so I felt bad for not updating in a WHILE (around 2 ish months). Basically this is half the update I was going to release for chapter 18 KEKW.

The reason why I posted this is because it's been two months and I'm sure people have been wondering if I'll be updating, and I felt bad if I were to update the fic with smth called 'Not an Update' about two months since the last update HAHFLSAKDFJ

Basically-- Yeah, don't worry everyone this fic is still ongoing, I've just been struggling with the dynamic with Crimeboys atm (writing it is so difficult for me, I've been tryna read crimeboys centric fics for a while now to get me into writing them LMFAO) as well as finishing the last fics for this event I partook in called "MCYT Fic Fight" (If you're curious, I've got like 12 fics posted in the month of august-early september HALSKDFJ)

If you're craving bedrock bros reincarnation/isekai content you can try reading this fic I wrote called "Technoblade's Tactical Guide to Preventing The Fictitious Apocalypse" where this time Technoblade is the one who reincarnates into a book HAHLSKFJ It's finished, but I'm writing an epilogue of it!! (it's the 7th chapter)

[\(link here\)](#).

Anyway, Im sorry if it isn't really up to your expectations! This chapter is unedited and it isn't finished either lmfao. I might post a new chapter 18 eventually or go straight to chapter 19 SJFLKASJDF

Also, I don't find your questions re: my update schedule rude (personally), just situational-wise I found myself unable / too guilty to answer them (until now) because I normally have a frequent uploading schedule, I've just been creatively burnt out with this fic because the last time i updated this was when smth happened. Thank you for being patient though ^u^ <3

I can't make any promises about a more frequent schedule for updates, but I hope yall know I haven't abandoned this fic (god forbid i abandon this one, this fic is my lil academic-achiever-artist-athlete child /lhj)

Happy reading! :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy has his chin on Sam's shoulder , which means that the fucker doesn't know what expression he has on his face. Holy fucking shit he did *not* expect this to happen. He'd already known long ago that Sam was a tad bit unhinged, slightly to the left of normal. Just slightly.

Holy shit, he's actually bluffing. He doesn't *know* what shit Sam pulled but if he killed a horse he certainly had to have done some other shit other than send some sort of fucking message to Dream. Tommy's known him for three years and he knows that it's not as simple as it is. All this simplicity just isn't how Sam works.

"You really won't be hurting Wilbur?" Tommy asks, patting Sam on the back. He's double checking.

"I won't even speak badly of him, Prince Tommy." Okay, that sounds sincere but he really has room for doubt when it comes with this man.

"You promised."

"I did."

The conversation ends at that.

Well, verbally, that is. Tommy is currently grasping at the seams attempting to put on that dumb enchant that Ranboo has been trying so hard to get him to do. Well, not this one specifically. It was something similar to what he already knows from his old life— something he'd see cursed onto prisoners doomed for life. Curse of Binding. Enchants were usually placed onto items so the idea of it clinging to a person *without* the use of an enchanting table is already odd enough to him as it is.

But here Tommy is, tugging at the metaphorical strings of magic that apparently, according to Ranboo of all people, 'is what binds the universe'. Chanting his will again and again into existence, he clings into the idea of that promise while trying to tie a metaphorical-magical knot, recalling desperately the familiar sensation of Binding.

He's not really getting any tells or signs of success that Ranboo had told him he'd get if he'd succeeded. There's no warmth, no light, and definitely no reaction from Sam himself.

Tommy scolds himself for his recklessness, banking all his hopes on something he tries so hard to do but has always failed to. Magic. He can't *do* magic, so what made him think he'd succeed now? Fuck, where did his self-preservation go? Hadn't he, you know, prioritized himself first? Where did his heartlessness and lack of consideration for others hide, it has to be somewhere under all the gooey shit that started spilling everywhere. He really had to sabotage himself for Wilbur, did he?

But, in hindsight, it should be in his best interest that Wilbur is alive and well and unsabotaged. After all, in both the Prince of Song and now, Wilbur has always been on Theseus' side—err, well, that is until he died. Though at that point, Theseus had become his prime motivator in all things other than political.

The implications of Sam ruining Wilbur's story is unclear but he really *really* should stop messing with the storyline. It might morph into something unrecognizable and Tommy would just end up in a mess, losing the only thing that gives him an upper hand.

Well, not that he could anyway. Tommy has done his fair share of effort in making sure the plot doesn't go *too* haywire. He looks down at his hand, and he focuses. *Really* focuses, as in metaphysical, out-of-this-world type of focus.

Faintly a thick line curls around his wrist, circling around and wrapping presumably at Sam's own wrists. Tommy could vaguely see it, floating like a worm in water. He can see it if he tries, but otherwise, there'd be nothing there.

Ranboo had better be fucking right about this.

And now they're both here, and Sam is probably, *hopefully* none the wiser about the major fucking gamble he took there. Fuck his baby tears, weak fucking lacrimal glands are bloody nonsense. When will he be regaining his control back from this damned baby body, huh?

He'd risked losing the loyalty of Sam but he'd at least still gained some sort of weird, incomprehensible upper hand in this.

For the meantime, he lets Sam tuck him into bed. He lets Sam wish him good night.

Tommy waits patiently.

He rises from his bed abruptly, looking at the heterochromatic boy. It glows like normal. "Did it work?" Tommy asks with a small voice, anxious for his fears to be confirmed by the expert in the field he'd just dabbled in. He swings his legs down from the bed to get up.

Ranboo nods, and Tommy slumps in relief. He succeeded. Nothing's going to happen tonight, he had been worried that he would have to intervene—Technoblade isn't here for him to manipulate into bullying Sam this time. Tommy was about to ham on what he could pull without the Blade.

So after calming his poor heart, jumps off the bed. "Alright!" He whoops in the air, a direct 180 from whatever he'd been feeling earlier. Jesus, all of this stress is going to give him far too many moodswings.

He walks over to Ranboo who was standing at the end of his bed, and he pats him on the shoulder. "You were right, then. I was going to fucking weep if that failed horribly." Tommy said. While it was a horrible time to test out the magic gizmo he's been learning, it was also of a very vital timing.

The taller kid rolls his eyes. “Okay, look, when I said you could practice and try it out, I didn’t mean you should try it out on *Sam* .”

“What, you want me to test it out on a weaker person?”

“I was *honestly* thinking you’d try something small on *me* .” Ranboo admits, "At least I could control whatever you put on *me*."

“Not too late to try—” Tommy raises an arm to touch the magician.

There’s a *vwoop* , and Ranboo is all the way at the other end of the room. “No.” He whisper shouts. “You’ve tried it *once* and that’s it!” He points at Tommy.

Tommy raises his hands. “Alright, alright,” He says defensively. “Damn, didn’t think you’d be such a pussy about it.” He rolls his eyes. “Besides, I needed to do something about it anyway. I had the vibes that Sam was about to pull something. I was honestly going to ask you to do something about it.” Tommy looks up,

Ranboo looks at him with that disbelief that’s been stuck on his face since he’s ever met him.

There was an unspoken agreement between himself and Ranboo.

“You are a terrifying child.”

“We both know I’m not an ordinary kid.”

Ranboo scoffs. “Understatement.”

“Fuck you! You’re an understatement!”

“What does that even mean?”

Tommy points a finger, opening his mouth for some retort but finding nothing. He lowers his finger and tilts his head down as if in disdain. “Exactly that, my friend, *exactly* that.”

Ranboo rolls his eyes, “Alright, so since you’ve done your fair share of Magic Manipulation today—”

“I can and I will learn more today, I want to do a lot more magic shit.”

“ *Magic shi*—? Okay why do I even bother at this point?” Ranboo sighs, “Okay, look,” He walks towards Tommy’s vanity and points at the mirror.

Tommy blinks, but he obliges anyway. He stands in front of the vanity and looks, but he doesn’t know what he’s looking for exactly. He looks at Ranboo for a hint.

“Your eyes, Tommy.”

He looks again, and he notices something odd. It’s sharper. How could that be explained—

It's like the gems that his eyes are, gained a lot more cuts than usual. The fractals or whatever they're called are smaller, a bit more prominent but a lot thinner in shape. "Oh that's trippy." It's like looking through a kaleidoscope and suddenly your familiar kaleidoscope toy had a lot more trinkets in it than before.

"You succeeded, yes, but you've sorta done something." Ranboo says, but he sounds *unsure*.

Alright, that's not very assuring. Ranboo is *supposedly* the know-it-all when it comes to magic, seeing that it was this bastard that saved him from the ridiculous magic allergy incident. It's not even an allergy! It's like a very badly timed overdose. He should be fine!

Though, based from Ranboo's clear hesitation it doesn't *sound* like he's fine.

He jerks his head to glare at Ranboo for his vaguely concerning comment. "Okay, not fuckin' helpful." Tommy hisses.

"Well I can't say I know! I could list so many reasons. There aren't many of you around here!"

"There are more of me?"

"Isn't, uh, *Technoblade* like you? Phil and Kristin too." Ranboo blinks-- "Err, I mean you and Technoblade technically. But if you mean to say the weird, timey tangled, *cut* strings you've got all over you, well, you're special in that case. I don't wanna mess you up and have Technoblade mess up my entire physique-- I had a hard time putting this together, you know?" He gestures at his body.

Tommy rolls his eyes, people would look at him and say he's got the backbone of a chocolate éclair, but Ranbitch is really just a... what's the word-- oh, a bitchy. He's a whiny entitled bitch, yeah, that's right.

"Point is, your situation is unique and so are all the other problems that come with you." Ranboo says, completely unaware of Tommy's internal comments about him.

"Problems?" Tommy raises an eyebrow. "Okay, that's, uh, bad?"

"So no more practice until your eyes get back to normal." Ranboo says decisively, which is rare because usually the fucker is always so unsure despite his very clear hold on whatever cool mage powers he's got. He places a finger in between Tommy's eyebrows, and flicks his head back. He feels a sensation under his lids when he'd shut his eyes on reflex.

Tommy, a few steps back because he'd needed to regain his balance, yelped. "What was that for!?" He screeches,

Ranboo is gone though. And Tommy, begrudgingly, tucks himself back to sleep.

“Hey, Tommy, is there anything you need?” Wilbur asks mid-discussion, probably some empath bullshit since he’s the protagonist. Of *course* he’d know he’s incredibly bummed.

He slumps over the table, as if Wilbur calling out his behavior had given him the leisure of removing the shitty mask of ‘I’m fine and I’m the Third Beloved Prince!’ and he just goes face flat on the table. “Nothing you nor I can get, apparently.” Tommy says, muffled in his stacks of notes and papers.

There’s a lot of them, he realizes. He’s not normally this invested in his studies but the nerd in Wilbur had brought out the nerd in Tommy. Kind of cringe, but hey, Tommy says he likes learning and it’s about time he learns to walk his talk.

With the pages upon pages of filled up notebooks he realizes that it’s been a considerable lot of lectures since he’s actually met him. It’s somewhere around the end of the first week of Technoblade’s departure and Tommy finds that Wilbur has been helping ever so slightly in speeding up the wait.

Exhibit A.: “What is it? Maybe a talk can help.” He suggests.

Tommy peeks up, and he sees a very concerned Wilbur looking at him with those damned similar eyes. He’s already dropped the chalk at the ledge of the chalk board and he’d sat on the teacher’s desk in front of Tommy.

“I’m sad.” Is all Tommy could say, which sort of sums up everything in his web of relationships. In between missing Technoblade’s very unwilling and irritating company (FUCK okay he’ll admit it JUST THIS ONCE) and sacrificing his relationship with Sam somehow (to the extent of who the fuck knows), Tommy is not only *sad*, but he is *stressed*. As good company Wilbur is, he just doesn’t get it. He, well, Tommy would be very upset if anything were to happen to Wilbur for him to be separated from him but also he isn’t content with *only* having Wilbur, you know?

Wilbur looks at Tommy, studying him for a bit, “Is it because of Technoblade?” He asks sympathetically, and while he’s half-right, and while Tommy has *internally* admitted, for the time being, that he misses and *likes* Technoblade’s very *very* bland and boring company, he will not admit the same verbally and to Wilbur of all people. He’s not a prick.

“Yeah,” Tommy answers despite the obvious fact that he should *not* be verbally admitting this.

He takes a moment to respond, as if he was taking in Tommy’s very *very* incorrect answer. Tommy looks up shyly, and he catches a glimpse of Wilbur’s expression. Helpless. He looks helpless, like he wants to *help* Tommy but he’s powerless in that regard.

Ah fuck, did he say something wrong? Well, the fucker had *asked*. He doesn’t know what’s up with him!

Why is this guy so much harder to read than fucking *Technoblade* of all people? Aren’t they twins?

“Hey, what do you usually do when you’re sad?” Tommy asks him instead, and the question lightens Wilbur up. To be honest, Tommy doesn’t really get it. Why does Wilbur love being asked shit? It’s an odd thing, and while Tommy had initially assumed it was because Wilbur had been happy filling in the *reliable older brother* role without actually having said role, he knows that it doesn’t seem to be the case, really.

It’s so fucking annoying how the Prince of Song was written in Wilbur’s limited perspective but ultimately says close to *nothing* about the deeper, innerworkings of his brain. It’s always at surface level. Always so reactive, always at the top of his head. That’s why Tommy had abhorred reading the Prince of Song despite loving the world it made.

Wilbur looks to the side, and Tommy follows. It’s a guitar case.

Music. Wilbur and Theseus had *loved* music.

Tommy’s heart flutters a little. Why is it fluttering? Shut up, little fucker, you’re ruining the vibe.

“Oh! Is that a guitar?” Tommy asks, pointing at the case he’s looking at.

Wilbur grins, “Yes, actually. I’m quite fond of music.” He goes off to pick it up, and Tommy decides that while he goes to prepare for whatever he wants to do with the guitar, he’d go babble. People love it when he goes off into these rants. Techno certainly did and now he’s hoping the same goes for this brother.

“Oh that’s wonderful! Me and Techno are too!” Tommy beams. “Did you know, at my birthday he got me into this really nifty room with a very pretty piano, and I played all morning on it!” He tells Wilbur.

“A room?” His interest is piqued while he returns to the teacher’s desk, placing the case there to unravel the guitar. “There are a lot of rooms in the palace, yeah.” He says, but somehow Tommy feels like there’s something more to that.

Not that he’d know, or have any sort of inkling as to what this ‘more’ was leading into. “Yeah, I played the piano.” Tommy says again. “I play the piano really well, you know?” Tommy says while he tunes.

He pauses, and Wilbur turns around to look at Tommy. “Wait, who taught you?” He asks, and Tommy stiffens. Why’d he ask that?

“Why?” Tommy asks back, and by the rule of hierarchy he’s supposed to be answered first.

Oh thank fuck Wilbur actually follows some of these rules. “I don’t really remember any of your teachers being skilled at the piano. They’d preferred the wind instruments to the strings.” Wilbur answers, and Tommy feels his gut sink. Fuck, okay, what can he do, he can’t lie that Technoblade taught him or something, and he can’t lie saying *someone* taught him because the maids will out him somehow. And it doesn’t even need to be mentioned how he can’t exactly go ‘*Okay, so I’m actually a very special kid because I have seventeen years*

worth of memories that aren't of this world but there are surprisingly a lot of similarities so I'm very cool but hey I'm still Tommy— **GETS SHOT.**

“...Books.” Tommy answers, and he internally winces.

Wilbur blinks. “So, you’re self taught?” He asks, almost disbelieving.

Tommy nods.

“How did you figure out whether or not you’re right?” He asks.

“Well, it sounds wrong if it is wrong, innit?” Tommy asks. He is bullshitting out of his mouth right now and he isn’t sure if he could fool *this* guy. He’s the protagonist for fuck’s sake! He was written to be smart and especially sharp. “It sort of sounds the same as other instruments when they have specific tunes, except this is a piano.”

Wilbur hums, as if considering something. Tommy sees a glint of something in those eyes and he’s actually really fucking nervous whether or not he’d be found out or something.

But he has to think rationally. He’s got no other reason other than what Tommy answered. He can’t be suspicious of something when there’s no other alternative other than thinking that Tommy is just pure genius (which he is, but that isn’t the case here). Even Ranboo had a hard time believing that he’s got an extremely special situation, what more *Wilbur* who Tommy *knows* isn’t as adept as Ranboo when it came to magic?

Instead of more questions, he’s met with a hand on his head. Tommy looks up, and that expression on Wilbur’s face started to look a little more like *pride*. Tommy’s heart flutters a *lot*.

“You’re so talented,” Wilbur even sounds proud. “You really are.” It looks *genuine*.

Fucking. *Fuck*. What is this? What— is this *validation*? Actual validation? Not whatever people-pleaser shit, or misunderstood shit the others have on him? It’s really easy to invalidate a good opinion, mostly since Tommy’s always, *always* been lying to everyone about who he really is.

So suffice to say, when he’d had the intention to lie to Wilbur so he could get a pass for knowing how to play with keys, he wasn’t expecting this. To be flattered and adored with a warm hand on his head, ruffling his curly hair.

Belatedly, he realizes how he shares his curly locks with this brother of his. He also somewhat recognizes that fond expression, because he’s seen it on Technoblade so many times before. Like Pavlovian’s dog he’d

Before he could hide his face, he felt his cheeks grow warm, blood rushing to his face. Okay, *alright* what the actual *fuck* is going on with him?

“Oh, that’s adorable,” Wilbur says in a cooing manner, which Tommy thinks he didn’t intend to voice out because Wilbur gawks at what he just said.

Tommy, who had been already at an impossible shade of red, reddens a few shades darker. “What the fuck—” He blurts out,

And now there are two brothers gawking at what they’d just said.

“Oh my Prime—”

“Don’t tell Techno!” Tommy squeaks out, holding Wilbur’s hand with his much smaller one. Consequently, since Tommy’s arms are a lot shorter he’s had to hold onto the hand that’s closest to him.

Which is to say, right now, Tommy is *keeping Wilbur’s hand on his head*.

Now it’s just bombshell after bombshell. Wilbur had told the *prince* that he’s adorable, Tommy had cursed and subsequently had kept a hand on his head.

Tommy grabs the hand, realizing his mistake with horror, and throws it off of his head.

“Tommy, who taught you how to curse?” Wilbur asks, sternly. Tommy is so kindly reminded that not only is Wilbur *his* brother, he is also Techno’s and by god does he look just as stuck-up as Technoblade.

“Tommy.” Wilbur calls, and it brings Tommy out of his stupor.

“No one.” Tommy answers, but Wilbur doesn’t seem very convinced by what he said. “I swear! No one did! I learned it myself!”

“From what then?”

“I... heard of them?”

“From *whom* .”

Holy shit, he’d originally thought that the courtiers had been safer with Technoblade not around but now he’s fucked because he’d dropped his guard around a smaller Technoblade right here. Wilbur is Technoblade’s twin, *of course* there’d be some similarity.

Not to mention, Wilbur had definitely been like this before with Theseus. Overprotective in the face of the servants, berating them for hurting Theseus. It’s nothing to sneeze at, Wilbur’s anger. Wilbur had understood the plight of the common-folk or at least the lower ranked nobles, but he also knows where unnecessary cruelty makes its way, and he recognizes it with the way they treated Theseus.

But there’s no need for that here. Not when there’s no one to blame either. Besides, he actually likes his servants as they are now!

“I, uh, I don’t *hear* them per se.” Tommy is at his wits end right now. Why is Wilbur so sharp? Why can’t he be dumb like the rest of the courtiers.

Oh, this must be why Schlatt wanted to dump this man onto him. Wilbur is far too sharp for his own good.

“Okay,” Wilbur nods, still waiting for an answer.

Tommy squints, “I... read books?”

“Books.” Wilbur says, disbelieving.

“Yeah, books.”

Wilbur stares at Tommy for a lot longer, and Tommy is unsettled at his seat, clearly uncomfortable with the lie. He’s normally a great liar, awesome, even, Wilbur just caught him off-guard is all and he can’t even find a good way to swerve around his shitty impromptu lies.

He sighs, now looking away from the prince so he could attend to his guitar. “Alright, I’ll believe you on that.” Wilbur huffs, but at least now there’s a playful grin on his face. “Well, in any case that’s a good thing because some of the songs have a few choice-words that some mothers won’t be liking.”

Tommy *beams* at that. “OH!” Tommy cheers. “What’s it going to be?” He asks, leaning forward at his desk. “Look at you, being a horrible horrible influence to the youth. Shame on you, Wilbur. Shame.”

Wilbur replicates that grin. “Well, I’ll have you know that it has been no fault of mine that you had been wrongfully influenced by literature. Books. They should really keep an eye on those things these days.” He tsks, playing into the bit.

“Oh no, my only source of unfiltered material. Whatever shall I do.” Tommy snickers,

The old brunet rolls his eyes, setting himself on the table while he places the guitar comfortably on his lap. “No longer the only one, if I do say so myself.” He raises a finger to his lips. He tests out another strum, and Tommy honestly feels a tad bit excited. “Though, fair warning, a lot of the things I sing aren’t very direct.” Wilbur tilts his head. “I’m not actually sure how far off you are in creative literature, but hey I might as well shoulder the lot of their education.”

“Fuck yeah!” Tommy cheers, but there’s a warning, low *‘language’* coming from the older brunet but Tommy ignores it. “Look at you, innovative teaching. More teachers should be like you.” The younger nods.

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah! You’re the best.”

He strums wrong, but he quickly recovers. He has a genuine smile on his face. “You think so?” He asks, and Tommy is getting a good read on this guy today, hearing the slight lilt to his tone, seeing the little, not very subtle tells that should be blatant compared to Technoblade’s body language but a different set of words altogether.

So with what he sees on Wilbur, he nods. He's certain. "I know so."

If they sing (or yell, in Tommy's case) loud enough for Sam to hear from outside the room, well, no one seems to comment on it.

Chapter End Notes

HI HELLO OK I forgot to mention earlier--

Basically I've been seeing a lot of videos as of late on my fics! I think they're pog, but also what I don't like is that I either have to be told by one of my friends who came across them or I have to dig them up from the depths of youtube HALDKJSADF

ANYWAY POINT IS If you have content of this fic pls pLEASE link them in the comments or mention me on twitter (@serashalala), I love seeing them sm. This includes fanart, inspired fics, youtube videos, tiktoks, literally anything AHAHFSLKDFJ. Ty for liking my fic enough to actually mAKE stuff about it, I think it's so cool /pos gen

Killjoy moments

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

William Soot is fitting for a man of the garden. People could spot him hunched beside the estranged prince, and no one would blink an eye. They do not care for whatever he wishes to do in his free time. There is nothing but his mind that is of importance, and people had long discerned him as a fool for wanting to connect to such an unimportant being.

He is crouched beside Theseus, grime is on his face and there is dirt on his hands but he does not care. He wants to be with his brother.

“Thanks for helping me out with these flowers, Will.” Theseus had said with such gratitude, planting buttercups on the soil.

William had not the will to tell Theseus that buttercups are invasive by nature, and planting these flowers is useless. “Not a problem, my Prince.” William says with a hum. His younger brother looks so happy, he does not want to crush that happiness.

Internally he rages.

Because these are things that Theseus should have been taught. Yet he'd been neglected. William had put himself up to tutor Theseus personally. He loves learning, the child. He's talented, and he soaks up information like a sponge. No one is willing to provide, though—no one but him.

So he made sure to put time for Theseus for three times a week to teach him.

He just won't tackle the topic of weeds, maybe. William doesn't want to crush Theseus.

“Why do you even like buttercups?” William questions during their session. Theseus looks up, curious about such a question. William had long since understood how deprived of conversation Theseus is. Small talk is confusing for the kid, especially when everyone abhors him in this damned grounds.

Theseus shrugs. “They're pretty, and they're stubborn.” Theseus tells William. “As you know, the gardeners don't really... like my garden, so I don't see flowers often. Except these guys. They're stubborn and resilient.” Theseus smiles softly when he finishes with a patch, looking at it fondly. “It's like they're fighting to stay.” to stay with me, William's mind supplies. It isn't helpful.

It paints a clearer and more lonesome image of his brother, and it aches that Theseus doesn't even know why, that he's planting flowers with the very man who had made it possible.

Instead, with a hand dirtied by soil, his hand lands on his head.

Theseus had finally grown accustomed to the attention, and he sends William the brightest smile in the world. It's as golden as the sun.

William adores his brother.

William intends for Theseus to know how loved he is, starting with flowers that are not weeds, and dirt in his hair.

Whatever Wilbur did was supposed to help . Apparently, sometimes music does get old no matter how much one would love it. It did help a few days back, probably, but it doesn't last for long. It's not helping anymore. They both know it but neither one addresses it until a few more sets of lectures and some of what Tommy calls 'jam sessions' sprinkled in between.

"Jam session?" Wilbur had asked before when Tommy had brought up their musical sessions. "Like, tea?"

Tommy squinted, not really knowing how to explain since he doesn't even know where the term 'Jamming' comes from. "Well, uh—" he just decided to bullshit it. Nothing new. "Music reminds you a lot like jam no? Sweet food, sometimes not very sweet— Jam ."

Wilbur had accepted it, and Tommy had been relieved. Thank fuck for people just believing his bullshit. They could always just chalk it up as yet another childish game of his.

"You know what? I think we can swap our schedule. We can work on history tomorrow." Wilbur says out of the blue, snapping Tommy out of his note-taking driven daze.

"What are we learning today?"

Wilbur grabs something from his bag, and Tommy sees that it's paper. The fancy type. Why is it so fancy? "I felt like we need to have a little impromptu lecture, of the sorts." Tommy's interest is piqued. "You and I will be learning how to exchange correspondence to one of higher rank than you."

Tommy blinks. "And... who is that?" He asks.

Wilbur looks up from where he's knelt near his bag. "Uh, the Imperial Prince?" he says, unsure. It's as if it should have been obvious.

Except it isn't really. The weight of responsibility and the weight of their roles has long since diminished from 'god-complex bastard who *can* kill you on the basis of a simple whim' into a simple 'older sibling figure that is wrapped around his finger'. So Tommy blinks, and answers dumbly:

"Oh, right, higher rank." He doesn't really think he needs to know about this really, since Technoblade doesn't necessarily approve of a formal way of speech. He then thinks of all the

potential work he'll have to do in the future, writing letters to the other Kingdoms— as far as he remembers, this is the only Empire in the World. He'll need this lecture, then—

“More specifically, your older brother.”

Tommy blinks. He gives Wilbur a deadpan expression. That is complete and utter bull. “Well that's dumb.” He blurts out, a common occurrence of blatant honesty between himself and Wilbur (save for a few vital lies, but who's counting anyway?).

“Why would that be dumb?”

“He wouldn't be able to see it anyway.” Tommy grumbles. “He moves around too quick for the letters to arrive on time, I might as well just wait here for him to come back.”

Wilbur hums. “Well, what if I have special connections that can drop off these letters for you?” He asks.

And Tommy blinks. “I'd say that's bull, because I *know* my brother cannot be predicted when it comes to who he'd be visiting next.” Not that he actually knows that, but he's making *educated guesses*. A good lot of it. So far he's only seldom been wrong on that account.

“Normally you'd be right, but when have I ever gone back on my word?” William asks playfully.

“In rebuttal, you haven't had any word for you to go back on at all.” Tommy responds, and Wilbur ends up laughing. “Hey! I'm not wrong!”

Wilbur sighs, amused, and he shrugs. “Alright, fair.” He laughs. “Then, if not trust my word, you can trust at least that there would be less consequence in testing whether or not my word is solid.” The brunet suggests. “Nothing to lose by trying, right? Worse comes to worst, you'd likely just store these letters in your chest and the only thing you'd gain out of this is practice.”

Tommy hums, considering it, before going ‘fuck it’ – “Well, if you put it that way then I really have nothing to lose.” He says. “So, lesson?” He asks.

The secret prince grins, and he hands Tommy some parchment.

The lecture begins, and generally the lesson is easy to follow. Tommy already has an alright comprehension with writing. Admittedly, writing things *formally* is a challenge, but not something too difficult. The only challenge with Wilbur's instruction is the ability to write so polite. Tommy can't insert his character into words as easily as he does when he acts outright. It makes it difficult to write, but it's possible. Feasible.

What's *im* possible is to write anything at all.

“I don't know what to write to Technoblade.” Tommy says, stumped after the letterhead and brief introduction consisting of scratched out ‘Hello’, ‘To the Imperial Prince’, ‘To Technoblade’, settled with a ‘To my brother’, and outright excuses of introductory paragraphs addressed to his brother who is the Imperial Prince.

Tommy has no body for his letter. It's proving to be a challenge to know what to write. He has a lot he wishes to say, none of which he's confident is legal to say at all (Tommy has a few choice words, as always, but he can't tell the prince these words lest he wants his head on a fucking pike). And the things that he thought to say look ridiculous on paper. This is a letter. Formal letters shouldn't have stories of how he takes walks with Sam (and occasionally Puffy) on the days where he is more free, or how he asked for a better brush for Clementine that he liked on his fur, or even the way the pretty flowers started to bloom and that he isn't here to see it with Tommy.

It all sounds so ridiculous. Tommy has to scratch out all these ideas and drafts before they could be fully comprehended through written words.

Stumped, Tommy's forehead lands not-so-gracefully against the wooden table.

Wilbur, who is concerned for his little brother, pushes Tommy's head away from the hard table and he sends him a *look*. He's questioning why Tommy seems like he's having a hard time.

"I don't know what the subject of the letter should be." Tommy grumbles, glaring at the paper as if it had personally slighted him. "I abhor this activity," he says, and he allows some lighthearted tone to pass through his mouth.

The brunet laughs. He's laughing. Tommy is having a difficult time on *his* lesson and he's *laughing*.

Internally, Tommy considers how much of the book he's willing to change if it meant that he could stab Wilbur's leg with a fountain pen. Alas, he recalls that Wilbur's favor is just as important as Technoblade's. The fountain pen stabbing shall occur elsewhere for someone else, then. What a shame.

"Have you considered— *anything*?" Wilbur asks, and Tommy looks at the man incredulously.

He's ridiculous. "I wouldn't have all of this trouble if I haven't considered literally everything!" Tommy grumbles, "I've considered so many things your feeble mind can't even comprehend how epic my speed of thinking is. You are small. A small man. I, on the other hand, am troubled by my genius which is why you can't even understand—"

Tommy is cut off by a snort. The audacity of this bitch! "No, not that." Wilbur waves his hand dismissively. "I meant to say that, wouldn't Technoblade like to know about anything? Anything at all. Your days are surely interesting."

"Don't be ridiculous." Tommy pouts, looking down at the parchment. His hatred for this thing grows abundant. "Technoblade deserves to read something cool, something informative. All the trouble to get this paper to him should be worth the content of the letter."

Wilbur smiles, and Tommy wants to wipe the disgusting thing off of his face— no, he doesn't feel comforted by the smile. Fuck you. "Tommy," Wilbur says. "Consider this: the worth of the letter comes from its sender." Wilbur begins, and vaguely, Tommy could understand what he's trying to say. "The content doesn't matter, I'm sure. Technoblade would be equally as

happy to receive the letter about your fascination of Levitrian customs and Adventris dialects as he would about your days frolicking in your gardens— as long as it comes from you, I’m sure he’d treasure it equally.”

First of all, fuck him, Tommy *does not* frolick. Second, he’s right.

To see the sender and have its name be ‘Theseus ‘Tommy’, Second Prince of the Antarctic Empire’ would be worth fucking *gold* . People who would intercept the message would send it for millions of gold in the underground.

Wilbur has a good point.

He looks back at the parchment and he notices that he feels inspired rather than frustrated. Tommy glances back up at the encouraging smile on Wilbur’s face for a few seconds, and looks down again.

“Thanks.” Tommy says, and he begins to write.

He decides to talk about the flowers in the garden. He also writes about the flora Technoblade might come across, and suggests that he take some home so he could see the Empire from a single corner in the garden.

When Tommy finishes the letter, he reads it. Tommy is a fucking genius with this letter, he did really fucking good on this paper.

Proudly, he hands the sealed letter to Wilbur.

The Prince tilts his head curiously. “You sealed it with... glue?”

Tommy’s ego has been fractured.

“Well what else do I seal it with?” Bitch, his mind supplies helpfully.

Wilbur hums, and he goes through his bag. He finds something like a stamp, except it doesn’t have a sigil on it. “Is there a wax burner around here?” Wilbur asks.

“It’s a letter from a toddler, Wilbur, it’s not a diploma or something.” Tommy retorts. “The glue is *fine* .” He presses.

“Well we have to make it look official. For all we know, the Imperial prince beheads impostors.”

“Who would ever mimic me?” Tommy asks incredulously,

Wilbur reciprocates that look. “You’re a prince.”

“Barely anyone knows of me.” Tommy scoffs.

He brunet looks down at his paper, and sighs. “Alright, do you at least have a flower you want to use to make it... at least appealing to look at.”

“Hey! The glue is perfectly fine!” Tommy points, voice accusing. Still, he rummages his pockets for something he could put in as an identifier. Tommy’s hand comes out of the pocket holding a wrinkled buttercup.

He squints. He doesn’t like what this means. Buttercups were a thing of the rebellion back then. A symbol for their once nameless organization. Tommy would abhor sending this to Technoblade only to later have it identified as the sign of mutiny. He pockets it again, and he looks at anything else. He blinks, and he sees a cufflink on his sleeve.

Tommy takes it off, and he slams it so that the sapphire bead separates from the rest of the cufflink. There is now a button-like appearance. He steals the letter from Wilbur’s hand, and he glues the button’s flat side on the letter. It looks like a seal.

“Happy?” Tommy snaps.

“Your brother will be.” Wilbur replies,

And he mentally replies how technically, Wilbur is his brother.

Their session ends that day.

All of these restrictions on his magic that Tommy swears Ranboo is just making up is making him utterly bored. He could be out here, learning shit like how to set shit on fire—you know, for *emergencies*, but nooooo, Ranboob the absolute *bitch* had decided that maybe it’s a bad idea to do magic since his eyes ‘crack’.

Technically, Tommy could consider that as a bad thing. But consider this: maybe it’s not so bad. Between lectures and biding his time with keeping Sam on a metaphorical leash, Tommy has very little time to worry about Magic of all things.

Except with the lack of a key part of his life, once centric around restraining Technoblade’s anger and lust for blood, he’s got a lot of time to spare. He can’t do much other than his lectures and feeling for the

He feels bored, and it’s nothing that could be so easily fixed by simply studying the theoretics of magic. There’s good reason to believe that he doesn’t even need much of these lectures. A lot of these information and jargon are things that he is already long familiar with. The ‘language of magic’ is basically just Enchanting. There’s nothing special.

Thomas feels like he’s replaced William—err, *Wilbur* as the protagonist at this point. He can’t help being so talented. It’s like the world is *handing* him plot armor and weapons.

Which is to say, this very minor ‘debuff’ of having to cut back on his talent of Magic is practically admittance of the Universe that they’re trying to nerf him. Too fucking bad.

Tommy's a genius. He could do magic! Fuck Ranboo! He'll just have to find another way of using it.

So easily, since he can't do the magic of *this* world, he might as well do it old school.

Fuck the magic of this world. Enchanting tables are way more superior anyway. Imagine—*infinity arrows*. He doesn't see *that* around here does he!

So he goes to Sam, demands that he wants a slab of Obsidian and a diamond (an extra three too, just for the sake of his little bank), and waits.

It gets to him eventually—and by that he means it gets to *Ranboo's* quarters eventually, because he doesn't think Sam would approve of him using magic. Not without the approval of one Technoblade, and the man isn't coming home until the month ends—possibly even longer, as the maids say.

Ideally, he *could* have waited.

Except that this is a whole thing that's happening *because* Technoblade is out. Prince Theseus of the Antarctic Empire is having his rebel phase, and knowing how much of a snitch and overreactor Sam is, he's doing it in *secret* thank you very much.

Admittedly, Tommy was excited, but when he attempts to lift the slab he felt very disappointed by the fact that he cannot fucking lift it. He remembers lifting these bad boys with one arm, and thinks that clearly something is wrong with the gravity of this universe that had doomed him with a weaker constitution in not being able to carry fucking *obsidian*, even just a slab! He could try, but he recalls that he doesn't have the tools, time, nor (regrettably) strength to actually implement what he plans to do with these materials. So again, he goes to Sam with a sketch of what he needs, and hands back the materials (which were all embarrassingly placed on a pulley—do not call him out on his weak arms and upper body strength).

Sam questions the sudden demands: "Tommy, what's this for?" Sam asks. He hadn't asked the first time, willing to just play into Tommy's whims, but he bets that he's asking all of these questions because of how specific his demands are.

Listen.

Enchanting Tables are very intricate work. Tommy wouldn't risk anyone ruining his chances at this cool epic shit. Besides, Enchanting Tables are a piece of *his* home.

Tommy simply answers: "Science project!"

Sam looks at the items, and back towards Tommy. "And you're doing this in collaboration with the Imperial Mage?" He sounds incredulous.

"Mhm!" Tommy won't justify his actions unless they're directly questioned. He might sound more suspicious that way.

The older man looks down, and he tilts his head.

“Alright.” Sam says, eyes softening. He places a hand on Tommy’s head, and Tommy, still traumatized by the *embarrassment* he had to withstand with Wilbur, tries to steel his features from something comically horrified into his normal giddy self.

Prime forbid he actually *curses* in front of *Sam*. Tommy has a good feeling that the book excuse wouldn’t bide well for his overprotective, overreactive guard.

Because chances are, he’s going to be losing book privileges for as long as it takes for them to recognize that cursing would be alright for Tommy.

Which would be about 20 years from now, he bets.

Fuck that.

“I’ll try to make some gifts out of it!” Tommy promises, bribing Sam with his childish promises.

And Sam, ever the weakling, was successfully bribed.

Score.

“Do you want to skip?” Wilbur asks, dropping the reference book he was holding. It landed on the teacher’s desk, but it was a rather comedic thing to do in the middle of discussing capitalism and how the Empire runs along with that sort of economic system but with stricter rules and added regulations.

Tommy, though, is in a whiplash from going from one topic to an entirely different one. “Sorry?” He blinks, confused, because quite frankly he’s really still lingering on the fact that the South’s hold on the majority of riches of the entire Empire manages to be the most efficient way to ensure that no single duchy becomes the most powerful.

“I said, do you wish to skip class today?” Wilbur repeats,

“Yeah, okay, hold your horses there—” Tommy squints, raising a finger. “You, the *professor* , are suggesting that I, *the student* , to skip class today?” He asks, just to make it clear.”

“Yes, that’s what I said. Do you want to skip—”

“I heard you the first time, but,” he sputters, confused. “Can we address the fact that you’re encouraging wrongful acts on your only student?” Tommy questions.

Wilbur doesn’t seem fazed at all about it. He seems rather amused, even.

“Well you seem plenty educated enough to spend a little time *not* studying.” Wilbur says with a grin. “Just saying, it’s not like you need to catch up to a lot of things. If anything, a lot of things have to catch up to *you* .”

Tommy puffs a cheek, considering. Well, it's not like he's wrong. If anything it's about time he slightly declines the learning curve a little so that the standards don't get drastically raised over the period he's being taught by Wilbur. The issue is, though, that Wilbur needs to be careful. Sam is practically out for the man's neck and if it hadn't been for Tommy wrapping that weird thread around his wrist to keep Sam magically and metaphorically leashed, Wilbur's head would have likely been on a pike as it is.

"What about Sam? You could be framed for kidnapping me, you know?" Tommy tells him. "Mans already hates you." He reminds.

Wilbur waves it off dismissively. "Don't worry about him. I can handle it. Besides, he seldom ever enters the place during our lecture time."

Well, he's right. Sam doesn't enter and disturb. He does wait outside though. A guard dog.

"...What do you suggest we do, then?" Tommy asks, a suspicious sound edging at the tone of his voice. "Let it be known, though, that I am *not* yet agreeing to skipping on our lecture." He waits for a few seconds, and he watches as Wilbur continues to give him that look of 'yeah, you're going to give in.' "Bitch." He adds for extra precaution.

Wilbur's grin grows wider. Tommy doesn't know if it's because Wilbur knows that Tommy would definitely give in or because he finds Tommy's choice of words very endearing. Either way, Tommy's words are true and if he calls Wilbur a bitch then he most definitely is a bitch. That's just how the world works, sad to say (for everyone else, that is).

Tommy doesn't really read what his intentions are, but he wishes he had because now he's suddenly swinging up the window. He crouches, observing the outside of the window— well, not necessarily the outside of the window. He's looking at the window pane. To be honest, he has no idea what is going on and he doesn't really want to test his ability of finding out.

He tilts his head curiously, willing to just watch what he's got planned. What's he got in his head, tossing out paper airplanes? Shouting out the window? Doing an impromptu music show?

No, none of the above, apparently, because Wilbur crawls out the window.

What the fuck is up with this man? He could be a protagonist, but there are *rules*, Wilbur Soot!

"What are you doing!" Tommy screeches in whisper, standing abruptly, almost toppling the chair he was supposed to be sitting on. He managed to clumsily settle it down, though, fortunately. If he made a ruckus he doesn't know if Sam would hear from outside. Music is one thing (or what he claims is music anyway—some people might argue that belting out a few lyrics isn't music but he could beg to differ), but to create alarming sounds such as a mixture of a crash and a horrified screech would likely result to snapping off whatever magic Tommy's pulled. Ranboo's mentioned before that just as some cords could be formed, they could be easily snapped as well.

Wilbur has a smug grin, before suddenly he drops and his entire being is out of sight from where Tommy stands.

“Will!” He screeches, ignoring all the thought he had prior to now. Tommy’s heart drops just as fast as Wilbur, and he runs to the window to look at whatever fucking carnage that idiot left behind. At that rate, his heart is already down lower than his guts and probably lower than his pride when he has to pretend being adorable

But protagonists never die, and Wilbur is just hanging by the ledge with a stupidly smug grin on his face.

“Bitch!” Tommy whisper shouts, leaning over the window sill and letting relief rest on his shoulders for a bit. That’s not to say that Tommy is not enraged, though. The sight of that had both calmed him down and awakened something in him. As if the chain called ‘restraint’ had one lock left and somehow Wilbur’s stupid act had been an extremely corrosive material. This is it.

Officially? Fuck the protagonist. He sort of understands why villains rock. Technoblade is the only valid character in the story.

So Tommy, now deciding that he’s going to do away with the ‘kind Theseus’ act (or at least the smidgen of himself that pretends to be Theseus) and release all his pent up frustrations on this bitch. Cain instinct is about to get smashed into this bitch’s face.

Tommy holds Wilbur’s arm, one of the two that is holding onto the ledge. He smiles back at Wilbur,

Wilbur smiles back.

Until Tommy pushes at the arm, and Wilbur’s limb slips a bit closer to the edge. The smile drops and it’s replaced by a very amusing look of sheer panic. They’re on the second storey of the wing that Tommy practically started owning since he moved into the Emerald palace, and he could say that Wilbur could probably survive the fall into the bush with minimal injuries. They have good clinicians in the palace after all, and Tommy had decided that Wilbur could do with less legs anyway.

Yeah, that’s right. Tommy’s out here to defenestrate a man.

“Tommy.” He says warningly, and Tommy’s grin widens as he continues to push him.

“Tommy!” He hisses, and Tommy doesn’t do anything other than continue.

Wilbur looks around desperately, moving his hands so that he could climb into a more secure position at the ledge of the wall he’s barely hanging from. Tommy laughs. “Oi, you bitch, you asked for this!”

“I did not!”

“If your idea of *skipping* class is literally losing your legs to falling then I gotta say, you used the wrong word.”

“Tommy!”

“ *You* climbed out the window and scared *me* , bitch!”

“And you’re confirming those fears by making them come true yourself!?”

“Poetic, I know.”

“Tommy!”

They bicker a lot longer than that, but the delay had bought Wilbur some time to swing his ridiculously long legs up unto the ledge and letting him lie on the ledge safely. He huffs, staring at the sky. Tommy could actually think of a fake internal monologue for him while he stares aimlessly at the sky.

‘What have I done to deserve this? Primes if the cain instinct is this strong already while this kid doesn’t even know we’re brothers how worse off will it all be’ Tommy internally says in an internal-Wilbur voice. *‘My name is Wilbur Soot and I’m a little bitch’* he adds for good measure.

“Alright, so is the plan to sunbathe outside a window?” Tommy asks with a tilt of his head, resting his elbows on the windowsill.

Wilbur looks up at Tommy with an accusatory look. “Give me a moment, I literally almost died.” Wilbur said to the child beside him. Tommy gives him a moment, sure, but not without a few comments about how stupid Wilbur is. He’s sure the man doesn’t take it to heart.

He gives him a moment, and that moment ends when Wilbur is back up on his feet. He scowls at Tommy. “You’re trying to kill me.”

Tommy raises both hands defensively. “You’ve been doing a good job yourself. No need for my intervention.” He laughs.

Wilbur scoffs. He crawls out of the window once more, and this time he has a more serious grip on the pane. He has a hand out, offering it to Tommy.

“I’m not going out through the window.” Tommy hisses.

“Well the other option is to go out through the door, and I’m pretty sure your guardian wouldn’t take skipping well.” Wilbur jests, but there’s truth in his words. Tommy looks out the window, and he sees that while it *can* be a survivable fall with the trees and bushes considered, it’d hurt like a *bitch* . “Come on, I promise I won’t let you fall.” He tells Tommy.

Reluctantly, he takes Wilbur’s hand. Wilbur and Tommy gradually make their way down. It’s surprisingly easy. People could sneak into the palace and kill him easily if it’s this easy. Should he mention this to Technoblade?

He debates against it. No, he shouldn’t. It’d make escape more difficult for him in the future–if there’s a future where he has to run away, that is. Things are going well, and it looks like Tommy wouldn’t be dying anytime soon anyway.

Nah, this would just be more practical for shit like pranks or something. He'll be a teenage boy eventually. It'd be inevitable for him to run amok in the palace without regard for etiquette or rules. And he'd be forgiven easily, albeit with a few repercussions, but forgiven regardless.

They land on the grass, and Tommy easily takes to sneaking around. He's used to it, after all. He's been doing this since he could walk. Wilbur is just as good at it. It shouldn't be a surprise. Even in the book, William had been good with sneaking. He's rather skilled and adept with talents that a stray child would have learned in the streets. Sneaky and wiley. It wasn't raw strength or magic that won him the war— it was underhanded tactics and desperation.

Not that they have any reason to be desperate at the moment. The palace is rather lax with the absence of the iron fist of the palace. It's easier than normal to get to where they're going. Tommy doesn't really know where they're headed, but he's certain it's within palace grounds.

They stop at a gate. It's an old gate, unopened for a long time now judging by the state of the vines that crawl and weave through iron bars that should normally have a parting in between. He tilts his head curiously.

He doesn't think he's been here before.

"What's this place?" Tommy asks.

"No idea." Wilbur says, shrugging. "I just came across this place sometime before, and thought— hey, this could be a good place to sneak off of sometime." He looks at Tommy with a playful grin, one that screams mischief. "Exploration is a key concept in being a good scientist, I hear."

Tommy reciprocates the grin. "How could a proper conqueror know what lands to take if he cannot seek them?" He says, referencing the early nomads who were the beginning of the empires and kingdoms.

Wilbur helps Tommy climb the loosened brick wall that goes around the gate. Tommy honestly wonders why people had gone to such efforts to cover such a thing. It only stirs his curiosity more.

Tommy sits on the top of the wall, waiting for Wilbur to get up himself. Since the man has longer legs, he'd likely take less damage from the fall. When Wilbur is at the other side of the wall, Tommy pushes himself off of the wall to get caught by Wilbur. He trusts this man, someone who would be loyal in both the book and here.

He's gently placed to his feet, and the two of them observe the place within the brick walls.

It's a garden, that much is obvious. There are buttercups everywhere, and countless number of weeds that surround the place. What should be familiar, green blades of grass are crawling with creeping charlies. Buttercups rise, in between, stubborn in their goldness as it peeks through the thick expanse of invasive plants. There are trees too, all of which grow at such

lushness that makes itself known to Tommy as unkempt and stubborn. They survived without care, that much Tommy knows.

He and Wilbur walk ahead. “It’s so weird to see something like this again.” Tommy comments off-handedly.

Wilbur turns his head towards Tommy. “Again?” He asks.

“The sapphire palace’s gardens used to be this messy, that was until I got the maids under control.” Tommy tells Wilbur, because it feels good to let it known. He can’t talk about this often to people besides Puffy and Ranboo. Except Puffy he seldom sees anymore, and Ranboo is just a bore to speak to regarding these things. He doesn’t like the blatant look of pity on the face of that boneless friend of his.

Tommy looks up, and he sees a hard look on Wilbur’s face. It’s a cold anger.

He likes this. He prefers this. Don’t show him pity. He’s tired of it. He’s sick of the fact that he’s survived off of it.

It makes him too similar to the person he replaced.

“Now it’s pretty again, and there are golden roses everywhere I look, but nothing can replace how pretty the buttercups look.” That much he shares with Theseus, though. The novel had made it a point to display Theseus’ love for flowers, buttercups especially. It became the symbol of the rebellion under the command of Wilbur.

Wilbur is quiet for a bit. He’s staring at the flowers. “It checks out.” He says out of the blue, and Tommy tilts his head curiously. What’s that mean? “Did you know buttercups symbolize youth and happiness.” Wilbur tells Tommy. “It’s something very funny, actually. It’s a stubborn little plant, hard to get rid of in a garden unless you actually try. Says something about joy, doesn’t it?” He looks at Tommy with a fond expression.

Tommy grins, “Well, buddy, the way I see it is that stubborn people like me find it hard to let go of joy.” Tommy jests. “I can’t help it, I’m just built to be happy.” He shrugs, and Wilbur snorts.

“Yeah, you better be.” Wilbur says. “It’s fitting for a prince, after all. You especially.”

The two of them pause when they spot something in the distance. It’s something white, and pale. Vines crawl up of these things. They step a few times closer, and Tommy hears a gasp from Wilbur. “*Oh* .”

He looks closer, and he realizes what it is. Statues. They’re very nice to look at, almost human save for the white marble that can’t seem to wear down. He steps closer, and he sees how dynamic the statues seem to be. It stands on a pedestal, some sort of stone stage. It would have looked so wonderful if not for the vines that had crawled on top of the things, curling around the people of the display.

It's vaguely recognizable, under the overgrowth, and Tommy from a distance could at least recognize the figures of two children and two adults. There's one, a woman made of marble, sat on a marble bench with at least three thick branches of vines crawling up towards her. She has this smile on her face, one that makes his heart ache. As she smiles, she is looking up at the sky with such a joyous, gratuitous smile.

He... he should know her, shouldn't he?

It feels like he should know her.

Beside her is a child. His head rests against her shoulder, sleepy. Curled hair rest on his forehead, but it doesn't touch his eyes. Tommy thinks that it looks vaguely familiar. He's seen this before, hasn't he?

Her other side is bare. There's still space on the bench.

He watches as Wilbur goes up on the stage where the diorama is set, and he sits beside the woman. He's on the part of the bench where someone could sit. Tommy stays on the ground.

Tommy sees two other figures. The other adult, and the other child. The child looks nearly identical as the child who is sat. Tommy almost thinks that they should be the same person, but he recognizes the small differences. The way their hair parts different, the slight growth at the back of his head where there is a tied up tail of hair. The child is holding something, and it looks like that something had fallen. He looks to his feet, and he spots something cracked, something that should have been round but irregular in shape.

A bird, he thinks, seeing the way the wings are so separated from the round body. He wonders what the bird is.

Alas, he sees one more figure. His hair is loose around his head, and there's a crown resting on it. He's stood beside his child, looking down at him with a loving smile. He's posed like the younger child, except unlike the child beside him, the bird stays firmly on his hand.

The royal family.

This is Tommy's family, before everyone but Technoblade was taken.

His heart sinks at the sight of Wilbur, burning the memory into his mind. Tommy makes sure not to comment on it anytime, not to bring up the melancholic look on his face. What a rare vulnerability.

It's such dramatic Irony. Tommy feels unwelcome in this happy family. It's as if in exchange for their parents, Tommy was given.

Tommy tries not to let the thought get to him. He tries not to think that it's an unfair trade.

No wonder Theseus had bestowed himself with such heavy guilt.

Even Tommy would hate the one who destroyed such a beautiful family.

“So why did you send this thing to my room?” Ranboo huffs, staring at the table where there rests one singular book. There are diamonds at the edge of the table made of obsidian.

“It’s an enchanting table.” Tommy answers. “Now magick me a hammer and chisel, we’re going to do some magic.” He sits on one of the edges of the enchanting table that is not quite enchanted yet/

Ranboo hands Tommy a hammer and chisel, one that came from literal thin air. “You still haven’t answered my question.”

“I told you, we’re doing magic.” Tommy repeats, focused on chiseling the fragile obsidian crystal. It’s a lot more brittle than he’d hoped, but it’s sturdy enough to bear his weight. It’ll be sturdier when he finishes the beginning enchantments that makes this table special.

“I also remember telling you that magic is off limits to you until we do something about your eyes.”

Tommy laughs, and he tuts. Ranboo just looks confused. “Listen, Ranboo, I am a genius.” Tommy tells Ranboo, and he returns to his carving. “There would be none of *your* dangerous magic shit.” He chistels the word of the enchanting table into the corners, going around from corner to corner, curving around the diamonds at the edges, outside to inwards.

He remembers it vaguely how he first learned about this. It was a pain to remember it at first, the lines of text and paragraphs worth of Enchant. Tommy finds that repetition is a friend of memorization.

Ranboo, watching from over Tommy’s shoulder, gasps in realization. “Runes.” Ranboo says, and Tommy pauses to look at Ranboo. These aren’t *Runes* . The fuck are those? This is Enchant. Tommy is almost offended. “I’ve never seen these things so large though, they come like—I don’t know, talismans or something. Never these large.” Ranboo circles the table, reading the Enchant carved into the crystal table.

“Shut up,” Tommy says, returning to his work. “This is Enchant. It doesn’t need magic from the user. It’s really fucking OP in your stupid world.” He circles around the last three lines of text. Tommy grins, almost finished with the table. Thankfully the obsidian is large enough for him to write all the text in, otherwise he’d be having some trouble reaching the higher level Enchants.

“No, these are Runes, and the coupling medium you’re using is— *obsidian?* ” Ranboo questions. “Why obsidian? Wouldn’t an entire diamond be better?”

“You can’t make a diamond table, idiot.” Tommy grumbles. “Too large. Plus it’d be stupid. What would conduct all the Enchant?” The prince answers his own question. “Obviously the Obsidian.” He huffs, sitting up to admire his work. “Diamond enchanting tables— what a

stupid concept. The Enchant would backfire or some shit It's like, putting down an entire redstone block and calling it a day." Tommy scoffs before sliding off of the table.

Tommy places a rug on top to cover the fragile words on top of the table, and as instructed, there's a hole in the middle of the table where it's without Enchant. He takes his chisel and uses the rug as a guide to carve out a slot for the crystal on the table. He turns to Ranboo, "You've got any lapis lazuli?" Tommy asks, "And a blank book, maybe."

Ranboo complies without a word because he has no backbone. Tommy is handed what he needs. He slots the piece of lapis into the center, and he places a book on top.

It takes a second longer than usual, but the Diamonds at the edges of the table begin to glow, and he could see the words under the rug glow. The light seeps through, crawling outward to inward and clinging itself to the Lapis Lazulli at the center of the table. Tommy grins, watching as the book levitates. The pages flip, but if you look close enough you could see words writing themselves on the pages. The brown leather of the covers burn, and it glows with embers until they fade into an iridescent color.

Tommy is almost nostalgic.

It looks like home.

Ranboo, on the other hand, looks amazed. He looks like Tommy has reinvented science. "A grimoire." Tommy hears Ranboo say.

"Nah, that's just an Enchantment cheat sheet." He laughs. He grabs the book from the table, and the light fades. It returns to its normal state. "This is why I've put it in *your* room and not mine. Imagine all the glowy shit in all the windows. I'd never hear the end of it from Sam."

"Can I use it?" Ranboo questions, and Tommy shrugs.

"Hey, as long as you have enough Lapis for the *both* of us, then I have no complaints." He places the book back, and he crawls up to the table to read the 'grimoire', as Ranboo puts it. Tommy flips along the pages to look for a specific enchant.

His eyebrows furrow when he sees Enchants that he doesn't recognize. Normally he's known all of it, but for some reason there are more pages in this grimoire than there should be. Some words are unfamiliar to him, even.

"*Unbinding?*" Tommy utters under his breath, confused. He's heard of Curse of Binding, and he remembers a few who would enchant them on people for pranks before. Unbinding is like the remedy they all needed but never had. He snorts, thinking of a few pranks he could play without making mortal enemies for sticking someone's head permanently inside a pumpkin. He goes through, and he sees so much more than Unbreaking.

He blinks, and he spots the golden enchantment. "*Mending* ." He whispers, eyes wide. Only villagers used to have this enchant book. No one knows how the locals have these, but they were always limited... at least, that's what he recalls.

Tommy grabs a bracelet he's hidden in his pocket. It's one of the many jewelry he has. He looks at the bottom of the book where the Lapis lies and he sees it glowing. It's adapted that iridescent coating that enchantments usually have. Tommy pulls the bracelet, and he hovers it over the glow of the lapis while he pulls the book closer to him for him to read but far enough for the Enchant to still have its grasp on the book.

He utters the words of the enchantment he chose, and as he does he turns the bracelet for the Enchantment to keep. Tommy grins when he sees it work. He hasn't tried enchanting anywhere else other than armor and weapons, because he seldom ever needs these on anything else. Now, though, he has resources to waste.

He finishes uttering the words, and the words on the book disappear. The Lapis Lazuli that was once in the middle of the table has disappeared along with the magic that comes from it. He grabs the bracelet, and he places it against the light.

There it is. He could feel the light thrum of magic. Tommy grins at the success. "I did it." He says out loud.

He has plans for this bracelet. He intends to give it to Wilbur before Sam starts to pull something. Then he could make a lot more of these for the people he wishes to protect.

It's a gift and... and apology. Tommy knows that he's not to blame for despair and tragedy, but at the same time he doesn't want this guilt in his chest. He wants to make up for it.

To Wilbur first, because Tommy, because *Theseus*, had taken his family away from him before there could be an opportunity for him to return happily.

Tommy looks at Ranboo who looks concerned. Tommy's smile drops, "What's wrong?" He says.

"Where did the magic for the spell come from?" Ranboo questions, and he's looking right into Tommy's eyes with confusion. "It's— it goes against the way of the world. You can't make something out of nothing, so you had to have taken something to mould into a spell."

"For one, no, this isn't a spell. It's an *Enchantment* ." Tommy says pointedly. "And second, no idea." He looks at the bracelet. If he focuses, he could see the threads of magic circling around the bracelet. He tests it by wearing the bracelet, and he sees his entire body get covered and surrounded by a thin layer of these threads. "It just works. Besides, it's a method *not of this world* , so Technically, fuck your rules." He says.

"Tommy—"

"It'll be alright." Tommy takes the bracelet off, and he uses his two fingers to widen one eye dramatically. "Do I have that weird eye shattering thing going on?"

"No." Ranboo answers. "Nothing of you changed." He adds, and that's all Tommy needs to hear.

Fucking hell, he's the main character. Fuck Wilbur, he's clearly the one the Story should be centered around. Tommy has main character energy.

Tommy grins. "Then there are no consequences." He slides off of the table and hops down. "Can you do me a favor?" Tommy asks, placing the bracelet in a bag with a note.

"I swear if you make me conjure up some chocolates—"

"Nah, I just need you to deliver this for me!" Tommy hands the bag to Ranboo.

"To whom?"

"To Wilbur." Tommy answers. "Just a protection enchant." He says to Ranboo, who seems to be eyeing the contents of the bag with a curious gaze. "Feel free to use or study the Enchanting Table or something. I've got other plans today."

Ranboo raises an amused eyebrow. "Dancing?"

"Dancing." Tommy says grimly. He ignores how Ranboo clearly sees it as humorous and walks past him. "Alright! I'm off. See ya nerd!" He leaves the room without a second glance.

He pretends not to notice how Ranboo's concerned gaze lingers.

Tommy ignores it. He's just being over dramatic.

It was one of the rare times when Tommy could sneak out of Sam's watchful eye. He has something he wants to prove to Wilbur, the bitch, who can't seem to believe his prowess as a pianist. He'll show him, the bastard.

Wilbur was sitting beside Henry, and they seem to be deep into conversation. Tommy can't have that. They can converse later.

He runs to Wilbur, and he grabs his hand. The force of Tommy pulling Wilbur must have been a lot stronger than he'd expected since Wilbur had toppled over behind him, thankfully landing in one of Tommy's dreaded carpets. "Come with me!" Tommy says, still pulling him.

"Prince Tommy-!" Henry exclaims in an admonishing tone, to which Wilbur frantically raised a hand for.

"Hey! Yeah, no it's okay." Wilbur says, recovering horribly from the fall but had still managed to keep up a smile. He looks ridiculously happy about being at the receiving end of a cain-instinct by a seven year old child. "Just a little healthy little rough-housing, normal for a boy his age." He says with a lighthearted tone.

Henry frowns. "While you're correct," He says while helping Wilbur go up onto his own feet. "I think that the Prince shouldn't be like this to people like us."

“What do you mean?”

Henry gives Wilbur a look, something between neutral and scolding. He looks at Tommy with what Tommy now recognizes is parental disapproval. It really looks like a grandfather scolding two of his grandchildren. “You two may be wondrous students and teachers but your relationship outside of that classroom is very much concerning.” Henry says, eyes glancing briefly at Wilbur whose expression sinks. “William, I admire your intellect at such a young age, and judging from your lecture notes alone I can tell that you put your soul into your work,” His eyes go back to Tommy, “But you and I know that there is a line that must be drawn. We all know this, do we not?”

Tommy feels a sort of indignance. Doesn’t Henry know who he’s talking to? Lines, boundaries, proclaiming such things in front of the Prince and the future King of the Empire—William?

Except... he doesn’t know. He’s the only one in the room right now who doesn’t know of William’s actual identity which is what makes this more frustrating and unfair, but outside those who know are easily overwhelmed in numbers by those who don’t.

So the image it paints—

Whatever image is painted doesn’t look good on Wilbur. It might have, once, on a prince with his own autonomy, but Tommy knows how they look at him. Adorable intellect. Nothing more than a child with a few extra talents and a loud mouth.

Tommy understands where Henry is coming from, and he understands the severity of this issue.

If someone had tried to kill William once for being a prince, the odds that it’d happen again for a commoner’s involvement with him is— depressing.

They should distance themselves from each other. Tommy gets why, because while Tommy knows Wilbur is his brother, and Wilbur knows Tommy is his brother, Wilbur should stay unaware of Tommy’s knowledge of it. Not to mention, Tommy has a duty to keep it that way otherwise the story will spiral.

Tommy looks up at Wilbur. William’s eyes are downcast where he stands, and he bows. He doesn’t process the flowery, apologetic words that come out of his mouth. Tommy gets the message. They can’t be brothers. They can’t, because right now they aren’t.

Tommy is reminded of Wilbur, sitting wistfully on that bench where he should have belonged— yet he is the only one different among the people in the diorama.

It feels horrible, to see someone who deserves this family be estranged.

But he can’t do anything about it.

Not now.

The prince nods his head, smiling something so blatantly fake, and he dismisses the apology. He excuses himself for a meeting with an etiquette teacher he should be preparing for. Everyone in the room doesn't comment how it's scheduled three hours from now. Henry's eyes are sad, but it has not an ounce of guilt.

He hates it. This guilt. This sorrow. What should have been a happy thing had been sullied. He's reminded of the weight of their differences, how the scales tip to his favor and his favor alone because of what his mere existence had chipped away.

He doesn't think he should be visiting that special garden anymore.

Chapter End Notes

Buttercups is a reference to my friends and I's roleplay where I roleplayed an entity forced to reincarnate by a god, and in each of their lives they're forced to serve the god as Soldiers in a battle the god finds 'amusing'. The characters often die as children.

Children without adult supervision, what will they do?

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

There are more lapses in his schedule now that he can't spend extra time in lectures with Wilbur. Tommy is quite honestly bummed. He's bored. He's stupidly bored. It's unfair. He wants to bother Wilbur. Tommy just has this certain sort of comfort in expressing himself as he is— an annoying little shit, rather than the 'beloved little prince'. It's nice. It was refreshing.

It was nice to receive affection without having to try to be worthy of it.

But at the same time, Tommy had let himself go a little too easily. Tommy had dialed up his cute child factor a bit too much and now he and Wilbur are subject to the consequences of his actions. He wouldn't be having this dilemma if he didn't just go ham on bullying the new arrival. This is on him, and technically this is on the royal etiquette shits because they're too pussy to process Tommy's raw awesomeness.

He does know that his relationship with Wilbur has escalated quicker than any of his professors before. Tommy has had Henry for ages now but that doesn't mean he's started to roughhouse with the guy. Nevermind the fact that he's an old and helpless being that would probably break his bones at a mere breath, Tommy knows for certain that if he were as young as Wilbur he would still hold some ounce of restraint.

Tommy feels bad for Wilbur. The man is lonely around here. Tommy had (accidentally, mind you) made it a point for him to spend most of his free time with Tommy when Tommy was free. He'd also spoiled Wilbur with things that he normally shouldn't have access to for now, such as sneaking into the kitchen and into the pantry.

The man is a dirty thief. Soot suits his being. Tommy says this with the most positive note he is capable of without excluding the ever-present disdain for affection he has.

The point is, he has a lot more time to spare, and a lot of time that is *not* well-spent.

So the time that he normally spends with Wilbur, he now spends with Ranboo. Sam is waiting outside of Ranboo's quarters, guarding the single accessible entrance. Nevermind that it's a literal tower, Sam is being 'vigilant'. Tommy is honestly unsure why he's tailing *him*. The book has always made it a point to write of Sam's loyalty to Technoblade, and while he's grown up with the man practically attached to him like a tail Tommy is still unsure what the fuck made him so damned *clingy*. He's been like this since the beginning.

And not to mention, he keeps blabbing to him about how he's glad that he's spending less time with 'someone of lowly status' and 'someone who isn't secure'.

His two solaces lie in the bracelet he's gifted Wilbur as well as the leash he has Sam on. This metaphorical leash that he sometimes forgets he's supposed to have in the first place. Tommy

doesn't feel safe with the magic Ranboo teaches. It's all theoretical, and there's no physical proof of the Enchant's existence. At least when Tommy does it he sees the words when it's held against the hand of the Enchanter, but Tommy can't be too sure that the metaphorical leash he's got on Sam is keeping itself on.

And Tommy at least has *some* semblance of pride not to ask Ranboo every time he's worried about it. It'd make him seem like an insecure wimp. He's *not* an insecure wimp, which is why he doesn't find need to ask at all.

He's lounged on Ranboo's carpeted floor, staring as Ranboo plays with the enchanting table. He does the most random enchants on the oddest things. For one, he's tried writing some parts of the 'Grimoire' (what a corny name. Just call it a book) and wrote it with plain ink on a normal book.

"I told you already— It'll only make another one of itself." Tommy sighs, watching Ranboo's notebook burst and transform with that same iridescent book— except it's thinner. It's like some sort of enchanted booklet.

"How does it do that?" Ranboo levitates the book so that it's still in the air, while he walks around it to observe how it looks from all angles without moving its location. Tommy can only think— what a fucking nerd. "It's *got* to have a source somewhere." He asks. "I tested the Lapis, and it's got none of the magical properties I suspected. The diamonds aren't worth much either like you said. The obsidian is just a type of crystal!" Ranboo looks perplexed at the fact that he doesn't know what's going on.

Tommy groans, laying his arms to his side and attempting to take up all the space on the floor. Not that he does, he is a very small being right now so he can't exactly take over Ranboo's floor like he's intended to do. "I'm telling you— it's the *words* mate." Tommy answers. "Why can't you just believe me when I say that it's just how it is?"

"Because that's how primitive magicians go about it." Ranboo answers with the sass he's come to adopt as of late. "You might be alright with not knowing, but *I* am the greatest magician in the world for a reason." He resumes to his normal position, "It doesn't make sense. I can *feel* the magic pulsating, but I can't sense where it's coming from." He traces the words inked on the pages of the Enchantment.

The blonde rolls his eyes, but he tries to think back. He doesn't quite remember how it works. Tommy just remembers that he could do it, and that he's done it loads of times, but he doesn't know why it works in his world.

It's not like things in this world is so distinctly different from his either. A lot of mechanics work similarly, but used more innovatively and creatively. It's like there are less restrictions here than in his world.

Hell, he can't Enchant Mending and Infinity together in his old life, and Tommy could bet his entire life that he could merge the two enchantments into one.

Regardless, Tommy doesn't give a fuck about whatever Ranboo is nerding about— mostly because he's *bored* .

And he makes sure to let it be known about every minute that Ranboo is not paying attention to him.

“Ranboooooo,” he calls out loud, and he knows that his voice is grating on Ranboo’s ears based on how the bottom of his eyelid twitches. It’s obvious that he’s irritated, but he’s really *trying* not to get bothered.

Tommy snorts at the effort.

But also he knows that he should be ashamed of how childish he’s being. He’s already honestly lost count of how old he really is. All he cares about is that in this world, he’s seven years old. Mentally though, he should be a lot more mature than this.

Primes, what has this castle life done to him?

Tommy doesn’t regret any irritation he’s inflicted on Ranboo, though. Shame be damned, he’s *bored*.

“Ran—”

“*Alright*, what is it that you want?” Ranboo turns from the book, slamming it shut. Tommy wants to laugh, but he’s just glad that he’s gotten the attention he’d been trying to catch.

“I’m bored.”

“Help me learn more about this then.”

“You won’t listen to me when I say that there’s nothing to learn about it!” Tommy raises his arms, exasperated. “There’s literally nothing that you have to know about Enchanting other than the words, and that you need something to Enchant.” He explains.

Ranboo shows Tommy the book. “It’s got to come from *somewhere*. Look at it! It’s pulsating magic!” Tommy *knows* that it’s pulsating with magic because it *is* magic. He doesn’t understand why Ranboo’s making such a big deal about it!

“It comes from the *name* .”

“Runes do not work that way.” Ranboo grabs the dagger he’d enchanted. It’s got Sharpness on it. “The ‘Names’, as you call it, aren’t the source of magic. It’s the *calling* .” He glides his finger across the iridescent words. “It’s just— I don’t know what it’s calling *for* . The addressee of the Enchantment.”

“Then it’s not a rune! Simple as that.” Tommy says. “Listen, Ranboo, clearly you’re in over your head with this one.” He says, finally dropping the whiney and irritating voice that he’s sure Ranboo is glad is gone. “You’ve got to take a break or something. You’ll go crazy at this rate, buddy.”

Ranboo frowns, “I don’t need a *break* , I need answers.” He says stubbornly

Fortunately, out of the two of them Tommy is the more stubborn one. His life insists that he's stubborn. Hell, if he *weren't* stubborn then he'd be damning all possible way to live past fifteen.

With Tommy's method of insistence, Ranboo had finally parted ways with that damned table. "What do you want us to do." Ranboo says, and he could tell that he's still upset at being taken away from his beloved researching. Tommy thinks that Ranboo is cringe.

"I don't have anything in mind." Tommy admits, and upon his answer Ranboo immediately turns his back on Tommy and attempts to walk back to the enchantment table. "OI!" Tommy yells, tackling Ranboo so that he doesn't go an inch closer back to that stupid table. He is really starting to regret bringing that piece of technology into Ranboo's room of all places.

Ranboo glares at Tommy. "So, you want a playmate?" He says, and Tommy thinks that it sounds rather ominous. "Alright, I think I've got something for you to do." Ranboo's glare turns into a smile he doesn't quite trust.

Tommy beams, only to realize his usage of *you* and not *us*. He lets go, and he steps back with both palms raised defensively. "H-Hey, I thought we were *both* going to do something?"

The two-toned fucker shrugs, "Well, you're the bored one, and I just happen to be occupied." Ranboo says, and Tommy has half the mind to break that damned enchantment table if it meant that Ranboo could despair on that rather than doom Tommy somehow. "I've got a few parameters for your potential playmate. Prime rest their soul upon meeting you."

Ranboo nabs a hair strand from Tommy's head, and he drops it beside him. The strand becomes two, and three, and four, and it goes on and on until suddenly he's not holding the hair anymore. No, because the thing that's holding the strand of hair is an entire person.

Who looks *exactly* like Tommy.

Tommy blinks. What the fuck?

Ranboo raises his hand, and with his finger he flicks Tommy's forehead with so much force that Tommy's head had to be pushed back because of how strong that damn finger was. What the fuck!

He expresses just as much— "What the fuck Ranboo!" He yelps, and when he recovers, Ranboo is smiling. "Don't worry, I'll be keeping an eye on you." He says,

And Ranboo disappears.

He disappears along with the room, and the table, and the weird clone. Most notably, however, he disappears along with the *fucking floor*.

Tommy screeches while he falls, witnessing the ground running at him at full speed. He closes his eyes, and anticipates his end.

Only he doesn't really die. With his eyes shut, he feels himself land on something.

“ *Ugh,* ” There’s a groan from under him, and he’s pretty sure that this *something* is a *someone* .

Tommy opens his eyes and he sees that he’s suspicions are correct. He’s landed on someone, and he’s killed someone at age seven. Surely he gets to be pardoned at least once for being a prince, right? Technoblade killed a ton of people long ago, surely he would be pardoned for killing someone.

Tommy looks down at his victim, who is notably *not* dying.

Brown hair, and grey eyes he seldom sees because of how often he blinks. He looks like he’s tearing up. Tommy blinks, wondering if he’d be better off if this little guy was finished off so that he could be without witnesses or if he should start apologizing profusely.

As he weighs his choices, Tommy witnesses the kid roll to his side. The brunet sits up, and alas, it’s far too late to make a decision. He can’t be done with this person. Looks like he’ll have to lie.

For legal purposes, no he has no intentions to murder. It is all a bit.

“I’m sorry!” Tommy yelps, bowing his head and putting on his meek facade. “Are you hurt anywhere? Can I help you or anything?” He asks, fretting over the kid who could literally tell on him. He could imagine the newspapers– the newspapers he doesn’t really have access to. The Second Prince: Injured an Innocent boy, more at Nine.

He could see his execution flash before his eyes. Ah, surely Technoblade won’t let that happen.

Unless there’s a revolution before he gets the chance to come back. He should be coming back soon, right? It’s nearly a month. He should be on his way back to save him from potential charges against him.

“It’s alright, I’m alright,” The brunet waves his hand, the other hand holding his head. “Wow, you’re pretty weightless. I was expecting to break something.” He says.

“Er,” he can’t exactly say that he’s been enchanting feather falling to his boots. “Thanks, and I’m still sorry.”

“And I’m still alright, I’m just glad you’re not dead.” The kid answers.

Tommy offers a hand, and the kid takes it so he could be pulled up. “I don’t think I would have died from that.” Tommy says, and he thinks of a hypothetical scenario where he would have definitely been murdered by such a height. Ranboo would have been executed the moment he gets caught, which is a tough exercise because he’s honestly not sure who would win. Technoblade with all of his resources and potential magic, or Ranboo, the self-proclaimed best wizard in the world. Tommy has good bets on his brother. At least it’d be on his memory.

He shakes his head, perish the thought of him dying. He cannot be killed, damn it.

Tommy looks around, and he sees that it's drastically different from the environment he's become used to. It's snowing, for one. There are no cold winds, and the place isn't freezing for some reason, but Tommy could see the white fluff resting on the ground they're standing on.

He realizes that it's the first time he's seen snow in ages. There's something odd about this, though. For a place that's supposed to be dying because of snow, everything looks like spring had missed the memo. Flowers bloom through the snow, and *is that a bee he's seeing?*

Before Tommy could make a point to ask, the kid he landed on looks up, tilting his head curiously. "I was gonna say that the chances are high, but seeing you're alright, maybe I'm just wrong." He says, pulling himself up to his feet. He dusts himself to no avail, and frowns when he sees that he's ripped his shirt at the underarm.

"Obviously--"

Tommy is cut off by a very familiar voice. He snaps his head towards the caller, and he sees someone familiar from a distance. Before he could let the identity sink into his head, he's snatched by the wrist and tugged into a run. He gets pulled down when they get behind a tree, and the kid motions a finger over his lips.

Tommy blinks,

He saw Quackity.

Brown hair, grey eyes. Tommy has an inkling on who exactly he fell on.

"*TOBIAS!*" Alexis yells, and the boy flinches. He grimaces, glancing and peeking at where Alexis could potentially be roaming. "Primes, I have no idea how I keep losing the kid." He groans, "I'm not spending another moment here, I'll just tell the guy I lost the kid again." Alexis turns around and walks back towards the large house hidden by the tree Tommy nearly landed by.

Tobias. Son of Schlatt. Heir to the Southern Duchy. Schlatt's key into controlling Wilbur, into controlling the crown.

Tommy stares, and Tobias has a sheepish look on his face. "Hi, so my name's Tobias. What's yours?" He asks.

The crown prince Schlatt despises. Prince Theseus.

William finds him under a tree. *The Southern Duke brought his child into the palace while he meets with the Imperial Prince, and this leaves Tobias in his care. He hasn't seen the kid in a while now since he's been placed within the ranks of the palace. The brunet looks up at him like a brother, and William had allowed Tobias to believe that for a long time.*

He had too, at one point. There was a time when William hadn't regained his memories of his family, when all he could recall were brown hair and blue eyes. Grey had been something similar, so mistaking Tobias as someone he was related to was something inevitable.

But just because they weren't blood doesn't make them any less worthy of being siblings.

He knows it all. Tobias loves bees. He loves nature. He loves the color green, and he loves so many things at once. He has many hobbies, all of them he started early but stopped because he was too excited to pick up another. He knows that he's smart, a genius under William's tutelage.

He knows that Tobias is a pawn, bait for a member of the opposite side of the board to work against its peers. A pawn, a trap, but one that William will do anything for. Schlatt is not a cruel father. He is rather doting, but it isn't a mutually exclusive thing for a doting father to become a manipulative one.

Tobias is none the wiser.

William is too kind to change that.

Tommy thinks that Tobias in the book is far too underrated. He's mentioned a lot in passing, and rarely ever with interactions with Wilbur, but seldom is he the focus of the arc. If anything, he's a foil like Tommy but in an incredibly less present way. At least Theseus had been the cannon fodder for the rebellion and Wilbur's eventual involvement with it, Tobias was just a way to show how loving of a brother Wilbur could have been and how messed up and scheme-y Schlatt is.

Other than that, nothing else.

But before him, Tobias is a little shit.

"It's a carpenter bee, it won't bite you." Tobias laughs, giggling as he leads the thing towards Tommy.

Who has not seen a single bee in his garden, or even within his vicinity since before he was born in this Prime forsaken story. He should be smart about this. He should be the adult, seeing that he's literally older than this eight year old before him. He may be physically seven, but Tommy should be more mature seeing his plot-device advantage.

Except he isn't, and he screeches: "YES IT DO BITCH!" Tommy backs off, keeping a large amount of distance between himself and the damned bee. For all he knows, Tobias is *wrong* about the bee and that it's actually a wasp that thinks he's pretty neat.

Tobias giggles, pausing in his pursuit. "You're not supposed to curse!" He scolds, but it's obvious that he's pleased.

“Yeah? Well you’re not supposed to be *holding fucking bees!*” Tommy retorts.

The brunet grins, “I’m not holding her.” He says pointedly. “See? She’s flying.”

“Spare me the rhetorics, Bee Boy.” Tommy spits, “Now let it fly away before I start whacking you with a stick!” He threatens emptily, and Tobias, amused, complies regardless of the lack of actual stick to be whacked with.

Tommy had gotten along well with Tobias. He doesn’t really know how, but it was easy to speak to him. He’d learned sometime early on that Tobias saw him differently, starkly different from what he’d expected. To Tobias, Tommy had red hair and regular blue eyes. No sparkly golden hair and jewel eyes. It made mingling with him a lot easier, fortunately.

It turns out that Tommy is considered to be amicable with or without the title of prince, so *hah* fuck you imposter syndrome!

Not that he has any. No issues from this kid, nope.

The two of them, tired from their game of chase, ends up sat at the tree close to where Tommy landed. “You know, I’m not sure how you survived that fall.” Tobias admits.

Tommy honestly doesn’t either, but he has some guesses as well. “I’m just magic.” Tommy answers. “A magician can’t spare his secrets, you know?” He tsks, crossing his arms.

“I don’t, actually.” Tobias says. “Which magician ever said that?”

“Me, bitch.” Tommy scoffs. “And I’m the only magician you’ll ever have to listen to, got it?”

Tobias snorts. “Got it, bossman.” He laughs,

And he doesn’t notice how rattled Tommy becomes when he’s called that. Tommy blanks out, like he should be recalling something. Tobias only then notices the silence, and his amused expression turns to one of concern.

“You alright, Tom?” Tobias asks, now frowning.

“Yeah,” Tommy answers. “I just... thought of something odd.” He answers.

He feels like some part of him is suspended in water. Tommy’s mind goes back to the time he sank into the water of the lake at home. Something achingly familiar but always difficult to reach. “Anyway, ignore it.” Tommy looks up, and he sees how the sky is turning a tad bit darker. The sky’s colors are more saturated.

“It’s getting late.” Tommy comments.

“Yeah, hoping it’d be late enough for them not to notice how I fucked up my clothes.” Tobias grimaces, and Tommy gasps.

“You cursed!”

“You cursed a lot more!” Tobias exclaims, defensive.

Tommy waves his hand. “Don’t be so defensive. I’m proud of you! Look at you, a grown young lad.” Tommy wipes his eye, dramatically. “They grow up so fast.” He fakes a sob, and Tobias ends up punching him on the arm.

The prince laughs, loud. When he calms down, he observes the tear. “It doesn’t look so bad.” He says. “But I don’t really want to get you in trouble, so—”

Tommy removes a cufflink from his sleeve, and he places it in Tobias’ cuff. He watches as the sapphire cufflink, the one he didn’t break ages ago, started to glow. Tommy grins, glad to see the thing working. He figured that the cufflink that survived the murder for the letter was a good test subject, and he ended up keeping it. Good thing he enchanted the right stuff on it.

Mending, in this world, is surprisingly OP.

Tobias’ eyes widened, amazed at seeing his worn and torn shirt from the day get mended. The seams that had ripped open had shut itself, like nothing ever happened to it. “Woah.”

“Yeah, believe me now?” Tommy grins, smug.

“I think that it’d be in your best interest not to believe him at all.” A familiar voice says out of the blue, one that specifically irritates Tommy to hell and back. It’s Ranboo, and he looks smug as fuck.

Tommy’s eye twitches at the sight of the bastard. He had once told Ranboo that he should grow a backbone, now Tommy wants to take his spine and slap Ranboo with it. It’d be funny, he swears.

Primes what the hell is with these violent thoughts?

Tobias, good on his instincts, tenses at the sight of the man. He flinches, then he bows beside Tommy. “The Archmage.” Tobias greets, “We were not expecting you.”

Tommy looks aghast. What?

He turns towards Ranboo who looks flustered at the sight of him bowing at him. He raises both his hands, waving them off. “W-wait please don’t bow.” He stutters, and there it is, the spineless bastard Tommy knows and abhors. Welcome back, sass suited him for the shortest time but Tommy would prefer never to see it again if it meant that he no longer had to direct such toxic behavior to Tommy.

Listen, it’s funny if it’s on someone else.

Tobias hesitantly stands up straight, “Pleasure to meet you, sir.” He says,

And Tommy wants to slap the kid into proper sense. Right now Ranboo is posing as someone who is their age. He preferred to keep such form for a long time now, and it’s honestly really funny to tease him about it.

“Err,” Ranboo looks at Tommy. “Is he doing a respect thing or something?” He questions, and Tommy gets what he’s really asking: *is he normally like this?*

“I dunno,” Tommy says, “Tobias is very respectful mhm.”

“If I may interrupt,” Tobias calls for their attention, and he’s creeped out by the respect. He’s glad he wasn’t recognized as the second prince. He would have dipped the moment Tobias would take this weird as fuck tone when talking to him. “Is there any reason for your presence here in the south, Arch Mage?”

Ranboo shrugs, “Just here to pick up my *apprentice* .”

OH that’s just outright demeaning.

“Great, it’s not like I wasn’t kicked out.”

“It was time out.”

“Pretty sure I wasn’t given notice.” He retorts.

Tobias blinks. “Okay, I can see that there’s a lot of issues you two have to deal with—”

“Nah, it’s alright Tubbo.” Tommy grins. “Nothing wrong with a little bit of banter, right, *Master* ?”

Ranboo cringes at the sound. “Please don’t call me that. It sounds horrible when you actually respect me.”

“Die.”

Tommy is about to walk towards Ranboo so he could just go home and get welcomed into the comfort of his abode, but Tobias grabs his arm first. Tommy looks at him, questioning what it is the kid wants. “Er, Tubbo?” Tobias asks, letting go of the wrist, and it dawns on Tommy that he’s given Tobias a nickname.

Tommy shrugs. “Well, Tobias is one syllable too many.” He answers. “You’re alright with Tubbo, are you?”

Tubbo blinks, then he smiles. “I’m... I like it.” Tubbo grins.

“Then Tubbo you are, then!” Tommy says. “Alright, I’m off.”

Tubbo looks at Ranboo this time. “Er, if it isn’t too much,” His eyes glance at Tommy for a split second. “Whatever business you two had in this place, do you think it’d frequent?” He asks,

And Primes Tubbo has no right sounding so damn convincing.

Tommy grins, answering: “Fuck yeah.”

Ranboo makes a sound in the back of his throat, like some sort of cry. Tommy looks at Ranboo with a glare, clearly pissed at the notion that he's even thinking of saying no to that face. Just look at Tubbo! He's practically begging! How could you say no to that!

"Yeah, sure." Ranboo says, and Tommy could hear the hesitance on his voice. "See you."

"Thank you, Arch Mage. Tommy."

Ranboo waves, grabbing Tommy by the wrist. "It's Ranboo, please don't call my Arch Mage, I will literally combust."

Yeah, superiority does not match Ranboo. Tommy wants to make fun of Ranboo forever. No wonder Ranboo wants Tommy out of his space when he's working with other mages.

It's almost endearing how humble Ranboo is.

Almost.

"Bye." Tommy says, before the Tubbo disappears along with the snow and the bees and the flowers that bloom within the neverending winter.

When he sees that dumb enchanting table again, Tommy can't help but feel this odd feeling of giddiness.

He's really made a friend.

On one occasion, within the Emerald Palace, he runs into Schlatt. Tommy is unsure how he got here. Technoblade is out which means that the castle *should* be off limits. He's here though, for some reason.

Tommy is obviously bothered about it.

So he snuck out of class, one that isn't headed by Wilbur. Something is off with today. His instincts are tingling with offness. Schlatt is just generally an unpleasant person to be around, especially with his scheming and generally inconvenient purpose in Prince of Song.

He sees Schlatt in one room. He's speaking with someone, and he has that look on his face. Something smug and proud, and Tommy could understand that Schlatt at the moment has the upperhand on *something*.

Tommy peeks a little bit more, allowing the risk of being found.

It's Wilbur. He's here. Tommy should settle here, allow himself some leeway so he could listen into the conversation. He looks at Wilbur, though, and sees a dark and upset look on his face. He looks powerless, and he looks frustrated at it.

Tommy's heart sinks, and his general irritation is making him feel a bit more reckless than he should be.

So he does what he does best.

Be annoying.

"Oh! Mad goat!" Tommy grins, walking into the room like he owns it.

Which is true.

He does own it, and within the people of the room, he's the most obligated to let everyone know that he *does* own it. Schlatt has no right looking so smug and overpowering, because Tommy is going to beat his ass.

It looks like the man wants a second go at Tommy's wittiness.

The two within the room look shocked. Tommy watches as the two older brunets bow before him. "Glory forever to the Blood of the Antarctic Empire." They say to him.

Tommy hums, acknowledging the greeting but informally. They both go at ease, and Schlatt's expression steels into that politician's facade while Wilbur looks relieved.

It's a good decision.

Tommy doesn't need any information. He doesn't need to sneak around. Tommy has all the information he needs and more, and he has all the power he needs to acquire information without having to sneak.

He is the most powerful person in the room.

"What are you doing here, my Prince?" Schlatt questions, and there is an innocent look on his face. "I heard that you were in class?"

Tommy shrugs. "It felt uninteresting." He says. "I left the professor a note, in case that's what you're concerned about. Don't worry. If anything, I'm curious as to what *you're* doing around here. I heard the palace isn't entertaining guests until my brother comes back." He tilts his head.

Schlatt smiles. "I'm just visiting my scholar here," He places a hand on Wilbur's shoulder, and the man looks like he's holding back his anger. Tommy knows that Wilbur is good at lying. Tommy knows when he lies, though, because while his tells are familiar to Technoblade, he's a lot more expressive than his other brother.

"Oh!" Tommy claps his hands. "Why didn't you tell me? I'd be preparing better for your arrival." He says, "It feels rude for us to be unprepared for your appearance. Would you like to proceed somewhere I think is a lot prettier and welcoming? The lighting here is pretty dreary."

There's something on Schlatt's face that's irritated. "No need, My Prince. I was about to depart anyway. I was only seeing if my dear friend was doing well here. I'm glad to see that he's in nice hands."

Tommy hums. "Is it nothing that a letter can't handle? My brother is unfortunately not back, but he will surely be soon." He says. "But I'm willing to sneak you out if you need!" Tommy places a finger over his lips.

"There's no need, My Prince." Tommy turns to Wilbur. For once, he can't understand that look on his face. "He's here formally as the sponsor of my teaching here."

He tilts his head curiously. "Oh! I didn't know you had a sponsor!" He does, Tommy has always known about it.

"Yes, I endorsed him and I sponsor his stay and all his expenses in here." Schlatt says. "Wilbur is actually, *basically* my brother. Did you know that?"

Tommy squints, and Wilbur snaps his head towards Schlatt like he's scandalized. "Why 'basically'?" He asks, and Schlatt takes that question easily.

"Well, he's a formal Ward of my father's before I could be declared heir. It's a custom with the Southern Dukedom's Ruling family." Schlatt explains, and Tommy already knows that.

He also already knows why it's wrong for him to say Wilbur is basically his brother.

"That doesn't sound very basic at all." Tommy retorts, and Wilbur looks shocked at the sudden retort of the young boy. "For one, I'm aware of how wards work. The Southern duchy isn't the only duchy that practices that. Puffy's family has practiced it long before, and as it is Foolish, her ward, was formally declared her heir during her time as Duke."

"Yes, but I don't see how he and I aren't brothers."

"Wilbur isn't the Duke, is he?" Tommy asks. "You're of your father's blood though, so that releases the contractual relationship of a ward under the practice of heritage." He grins. "Dream and Foolish are brothers because the ward was declared heir, but you and Wilbur—"

"Okay, I get it I get it," Schlatt laughs, waving the kid's 'technicalities' away. Tommy feels irritated.

He sounds like a know it all. It's so cringy, but if it means he doesn't have to deal with whatever defamation Schlatt is putting Wilbur through. Wilbur is *his* brother, and *Technoblade's* brother. He won't go around listening to someone else claiming Wilbur as his brother.

Tommy doesn't want Schlatt to have that sort of power over Wilbur.

Because he's going to ask for a sort of exchange. '*You'll be taking my brother*', the subtext is clearer than the words that will be said, '*I would need an appropriate exchange.*' Tommy doesn't want that.

And he could tell that even Wilbur would hate being that bargaining chip.

“Anyway, I’ll be on my way.” Schlatt laughs, but Tommy could tell that he’s irritated. That he can’t convince Tommy of their bond. “It was nice meeting you, William.” Schlatt says, “Thank you for your welcome, Prince Theseus.”

He walks out of the room.

Tommy jumps when Wilbur slumps back to the chair that fortunately catches him. “You look exhausted.” He whistles. “What were you two talking about in the first place?” Tommy walks towards Wilbur, and he frowns, poking at his cheek. “You were upset before I came in, that much I do know.”

Wilbur sits up, and he smiles softly at Tommy. “Nothing.” He answers. “I don’t know, but since you came to my rescue I think I’d be able to handle this.”

He scoffs. “Whatever *this* is, it’d be dealt a lot easier if you just told me.”

The brunet places a hand on Tommy’s head, ruffling his golden hair. “Thank you,” he says. “But what good of a brother would I be if I let my younger brother deal with my problems?” Wilbur’s words hold a lot of weight.

Tommy huffs. “Don’t say that,” He says. “I might cry, asshole.”

Wilbur laughs, and the hand on his head ruffles his hair a bit harsher. Yup, cain instinct is coming into play he sees.

“Alright, get back to class you troublemaker.” He says,

When Tommy instinctively holds Wilbur’s hand as the older guides the younger towards his lecture room, neither of them comment on it.

Sam looked very displeased upon Tommy’s arrival though.

Tommy just blew a raspberry at the man.

“Tubbo!” Tommy is grinning, seeing his best friend walking towards their spot. Ranboo is somewhere in the palace, but he’s placed some sort of old as fuck ‘rune’ on Tommy, claiming that it’s his surveillance. Tommy thinks Ranboo should fuck off, but it’s proven itself to be useful on many occasions.

For one, Tommy has had many too-close calls with the inhabitants of the Southern Duchy’s castle. On one occasion he was nearly caught by Schlatt.

Illusion magic or not, Tommy could get found out by the bastard. Not only that, but he would have gotten Tubbo in a lot of trouble. Schlatt liked to shelter his kid. Tommy doesn’t see

why.

Tubbo is not naive. He's quite smart, and witty, but the way he looks makes him look so innocent. He doesn't have that sharp and mischievous grin that Tommy frequently has. It doesn't help that his eyes are a lot rounder than his.

It's easier to fall for the illusion that Tubbo is an innocent boy, but the opposite couldn't be more true.

No, in fact, Tubbo is a devious little shit. He doesn't know how William didn't catch this side of him with how often he was depicted as this innocent angel. It couldn't be anything other than symbolic.

He's a little shit.

Who is also about to convince Tommy that maybe it's a good idea to go somewhere else for once. Like, literally running away.

"I've been escaping this place often, it happens frequently." Tubbo waves his hand dismissively. "It's nothing bad, but it happens enough that they're all basically stumped whenever I do get out of the walls. They catch me sometimes but that's what the cool magic shit is for!"

Tommy doesn't really like the idea.

He doesn't know to what extent Tubbo's truth is. It makes sense, for one, that Tubbo's security is taken less seriously than Tommy's. It makes sense too that Tubbo probably has gotten away with it for more than one occasion. The issue lies in the fact that Tommy doesn't know if he could trust Schlatt not to do anything bad.

The man isn't a bad guardian. Tommy has guarantee of it. Even William in Prince of Song had begrudgingly admitted such a fact. He's a horrible man but not necessarily a horrible father.

"I won't get in trouble if we don't get caught." Tubbo reasons.

And really, Tommy isn't really one for overthinking. He's honestly a little shit too, and if given the opportunity in his own castle, he would have done the same thing.

There's a hand on his shoulder, and another on Tubbo's.

"Something was telling me that you two are up to no good." Ranboo says, and he's about to become the angel on his shoulder at this rate. He's about to convince Tommy that they're good kids.

"I think I've got somewhere in mind, now that you're here." Tommy grins, looking at Ranboo with that devious grin.

Ranboo rolls his eyes, but it's not like he's totally against it.

The boy looks like he's become bored of that dumb enchanting table that started this whole thing. He should. It's been three weeks since then.

And it's also been two weeks since Technoblade should have gotten home.

During the time, he's maintained a reasonable distance from Wilbur. He's just glad that the guy is wearing the bracelet that Tommy made. It's protection of the highest degree that Tommy is capable of providing. At the same time, he's developed a very close relationship with his best friend, Tubbo. The kid is just hilarious, and he matches wits with Tommy despite being eight. Sure there are times when he's lacking, a bit back on the lore and history of the world as well with the foreign languages (that Tommy regrets he made fun of in the face of the kid's guardian), but Tommy has been making up for it by helping him.

It turns out that Tubbo just has a difficult time learning through the methods of the professional teachers that Schlatt had hired for him. This just proves that Tommy is superior in every aspect possible.

To an extent, Tommy's glad Technoblade is gone because he's able to spend all this time with Tubbo and Wilbur (infrequent as it is), because by the time Technoblade comes back Tommy would have likely spent all of his attention in making sure that Technoblade's favor towards him does not change.

Especially when Technoblade would eventually see Wilbur.

He misses his brother, but at the same time he couldn't be more frightened for his arrival. It feels like the end of a time and the start of another. 'Arcs', as a novel would say.

Tommy just wants things to stay how they are.

But he knows that the novel's cogs are turning, even as the hands on the clock seems frozen and still. Everything is progressing as it should in the background while Tommy bides his time.

There are no gears he can turn on his own yet, not when everything is out of his reach. He's doing what he can to avert things. Anything within his reach he tries to influence. He needs to change it all.

It may be a long time, but he dreads the day when the guillotine drops.

Not that he'd be killed by a guillotine. Tommy remembers the vivid description of Theseus' head rolling by the cause of a bloodied sword.

For now, he just wants to... to live.

All of that treachery shouldn't happen until he's fifteen anyway.

"Ranboo, I've been meaning to go to Vistoria for a while now." Tommy grins, and Ranboo looks at him with a deadpan expression.

“A while now? You say that like you frequent outside the cas— *cough* — the tower.” Ranboo says. “What do you even want from Visoria, we both could easily manifest whatever it is we want.” He looks tired.

At the mention of their capabilities, Tubbo’s eyes start to look like they’re sparkling.

“No, Tubbo, I won’t be summoning you a new dog.” Ranboo says before Tubbo could even request anything.

“I was thinking more of a piglet—”

“Point still stands.” Ranboo crosses his arms. “And Tommy, what do you even want from Visoria?”

Tommy grins. “Window shopping! Duh!” He laughs, “Just imagine all the things we might see from that place. At such a cheap price too!”

“Yeah, ignore the fact that you even *need* to buy things in cheap prices.” He’s sounding a little bit too *killjoy* in his humble opinion. “You’ve got loads of gold, buy whatever you need *normally* .”

Tubbo hums, “To be fair, he can’t know what he needs without seeing it.” He reasons, and Ranboo looks tired. “Like, y’know, I wouldn’t have known that I wanted— no, *needed* a pig until I read about how badass they are.”

“You make an excellent point, Tubs.” Tommy places his hand on his hips. “So, two out of three votes Boo Boy, what’s it gonna be?” He grins.

This is how Tommy ends up with a cloak within a large crowd. He looks at his wrist, seeing a near-intangible thread wrapped around it. He shrugs and he place his hand back to his side. Ranboo had expected that they’d be lost, but he didn’t expect it to happen so soon.

The Visoria is the largest market within the entire Empire of Ice. It’s something that was mentioned once in Prince of Song, something in passing between members of the rebellion.

It was mentioned early on how the rebellion was birthed within traders. Of course they would. Ideas of loyalty within the empire would easily be questioned by outsiders, and the propaganda, unintentional gossip it may be, would spread.

Of course, revolution starts at the heart of where contrast and referencing of cultures happen. Thesis and Antithesis and all of that. He’s learned about this with Wilbur, and he’s known this from the start.

Tommy didn’t really have a goal when going here. He just wanted Tubbo to have a good time. The only issue is that Tommy’s separated from the two, and he’s likely costing them that enjoyment by worrying about whether or not Tommy is going to be found.

It's not like he can't be found either. Tommy is tied to them, courtesy of that weird string on his wrist. He's almost wondering why they're taking this long to find him.

Suddenly there's a hand on his shoulder, and Tommy flinches at the sudden contact. He expected to get bumped around, sure, but for a hand to suddenly *grab* him is going to be easily unexpected.

Tommy looks up, and he gapes when he sees a familiar face.

He's blond, for one. Tommy knows himself to be the only blond within his circle save for Dream, except he doesn't really know how the man really looks like. He has blue eyes too, but Tommy thinks that it looks odd and unfitting on that face.

Oh, he knows that face alright. He knows that permanent crease on his brows and that dead stare. That downward twitch on his lips, telling him that he's upset but not so much that he'd be killing someone.

"How old are you?" Technoblade, blond hair and blue eyes, asks him.

"Eight." Tommy lies, hoping that his illusion is working well enough. If it isn't, then Ranboo is going to fucking die by his hands before Technoblade could send Tommy to his execution.

He nods, and he crosses his arms. The man does *not* fit in this place. It looks stupid how intimidating he looks in the presence of everyone else. Hell, they're all *avoiding him* despite the obvious lack of ruby eyes and pink hair. "You're close enough to his age, I guess." He says, and he looks around. "I need your help, kid." Technoblade says.

Tommy blinks. Okay, this is good. He doesn't recognize Tommy. Not at all. "Er, with what?" For good measure, he makes sure not to speak in his usual accent. Prime forbid he allows any association with himself and this identity.

"I want you to point at anything you want within this market." Technoblade says, "Stuff that you want to have. In exchange, you get it."

Okay, this has to be some sort of trap. That doesn't sound like a fair exchange at all. He points at shit he wants to get, and Technoblade, this bastard who had willingly let a kid fucking *drown*, is going to gift this kid whatever he wants?

This sounds dumb and stupid and quite frankly, it *screams* trap.

"Uhm, how many do I get to choose." Tommy asks.

"All of it." Technoblade answers without hesitation.

"Do I pay you?"

"No, I told you that the exchange you get is your choice for that item." He says, and he almost sounds frustrated. Tommy knows that look. It's like that expression he has when Technoblade is faced with some random noble who he has to repeat his words to because they didn't get it.

And if he knows Technoblade (Tommy doubts that there is anyone more exceptional at *knowing* the damn Blood Prince), he's likely being as blunt and straight to the point as possible.

Which means that Tommy is literally being given whatever he wants.

Tommy looks at his pockets, and back up at Technoblade. "I don't have anything to carry all of it with." He says.

"Then point at whatever bag you want." He answers simply.

Holy shit, he's not kidding.

For a test, Tommy points at a blue bag weaved and patterned after Batik. Tommy recognizes it from a country adjacent to the Eastern Duchy, and he's read about it before. It's no cheap thing.

Technoblade approaches the shopkeep. He points at the item Tommy pointed, and asks for two of them.

"It comes in different colors, sir." The shopkeep says with a smile. "Is there anything you—"

"The one that's displayed on your shop, and a red one." Technoblade answers before letting them finish.

Tommy feels the urge to correct the man for being so rude despite posing as some sort of 'commoner' (albeit his posture and stature is anything but common— it screams of nobility, dare he say royalty).

Technoblade tosses Tommy a blue bag, one the size of his torso. It's patterned with blues and golds, and it's the item on display. Meanwhile, he keeps the red item. He doesn't hand it out. Instead, he pays for the two objects, and he looks at Tommy expectantly.

He's unsure what he's getting at, but Technoblade is giving him free shit (not knowing that he's his brother), so he might as well just take it for free.

The next thing Tommy buys is a pretty quill. It's green, and he thinks he wants to buy this for Tubbo instead.

It's a shame that he's going to have to give these things away. He can't be caught having them, otherwise Technoblade would find out that the kid he's giving all of these items to is him. What a shame, but maybe Tubbo would like these things more.

He points at whatever crosses his mind. He thinks about things he's going to demand Tubbo to share when he gets it to him, and some items that he thinks Ranboo is going to like. None of it he intends to keep in fear of his identity getting exposed later on.

In the middle of their shopping, Tommy can't help but ask Technoblade some questions. Small talk is fun, after all, and the knowledge that Technoblade isn't posing as someone of high position to kill him comforts Tommy because he's technically got a shield over him.

“Why are you giving me all of these things?” Tommy asks, “Like, you’re even getting two of everything.”

Technoblade doesn’t look at him when he answers. “These aren’t for you.” He says. “The things you’re holding are yours, but things within my hold aren’t.”

“Who are they for?”

“Do kids usually ask this many questions?” Technoblade asks irritably.

“Only the annoying ones.” Tommy grins. Technoblade’s eyes soften, glancing at the kid.

There it is. That oddly happy expression on his face. It suits him, subtle as it is. “How fitting, then. You remind me of someone.” Is all he says. “Stand still, I have something I wish to buy.”

Tommy gapes as Technoblade heads towards a shop to the side. He wonders what he’s getting, but it’s definitely something out of the deal if it means it’s something that Technoblade chose.

He sees something on display. A lot of them seem to be stationary items. Stamps of various designs and decor, waxes and envelopes and paper of various thickness and styles.

He’s really curious what the hell it is that Technoblade wants to get, but suddenly he feels the string on his wrist tug *hard*. Tommy turns around, and he’s rushed towards Ranboo and Tubbo who is some aisles over.

Ranboo looks frightened. “The Imperial Prince is here— where the hell have you been!” Ranboo whisper shouts, and before Tommy could answer he is teleported back to Tubbo’s estate.

“Wh— I wasn’t done!” Tommy exclaims,

“Yeah but I’m sure you wouldn’t want to stay there until the Imperial Prince suddenly detects your presence the same way I found his!” Ranboo retorts.

“What does the Imperial Prince have to do with Tommy?”

The two of them freeze, and Tubbo looks at the two of them with a suspicious stare. He looks like he’s thinking something. Tommy glares at Ranboo for a second, “Tubbo, I’m going to be honest with you—”

“I’m a personal servant of the Second Prince.” Tommy says.

Tubbo blinks, “Is this why you two have been sneaking out more often? I heard the Imperial Prince is out, but if he’s in Vistoria as Ranboo says then surely he’s going to be in the Palace soon.”

He is awfully sharp for an eight year old. This is shit.

“Yes.” Tommy answers.

“Yeah, this is how I’ve been able to get away with a lot of things involving magic. I’m not normally this careless.” Ranboo continues, which is technically not a lie.

Tubbo looks distraught. “Will I... Won’t I see you guys again?” He questions, and Tommy’s heart aches at the sight of this Tubbo.

There’s no devious grin, mischief does not glint in his eyes.

He swallows his throat. “Here are some gifts, though.” Tommy gives Tubbo that blue bag. “I just, well, I got them with you in mind.” He doesn’t mention that it’s paid with the Imperial Prince’s gold.

He doesn’t bother to segregate the lot of them from each other.

“If I were to go into the palace, would I see you?” Tommy’s heart can’t bear to say no.

“Of course.” Tommy answers.

Tubbo smiles.

Tommy smiles.

Ranboo has that nervous sound at the back of his throat again. Should that be normal?

“I’ll work hard to get there then.” Tubbo grins. He raises a pinky, “I better see you there.”

Tommy laughs. “Don’t be a stranger.” He says, taking the pinky and curling it around his.

Ranboo scoffs, “You’re really leaving me behind despite me being literally the only one responsible for making this friendship happen?” He raises his own pinky, and he curls it around the two. It looks uncomfortable and inconvenient,

But their friendship isn’t necessarily one of convenience anyway.

When Tubbo disappears from Tommy’s sight for the last time, he’s faced with the palace walls again.

He’s back. His break is over.

Tommy thinks he’s ready.

It’s been a rather long month –not even. It’s been *months* since he was left in the castle, and despite the shit that Wilbur had him do to, he quotes, ‘cope’, nothing had really dimmed down the excitement he feels with today. Even with his time being spent around Tubbo and

Ranboo outside the castle hadn't decreased the utter *gladness* that finally he has his most powerful weapon back.

If Schlatt were to visit once more without the large and intimidating shield that is Technoblade, Tommy is certain he will have to kill a Duke. He's such a domineering shit. He's at his wits end right now, standing right underneath the shade of the Emerald Palace's entrance. Tommy is swinging back and forth on his heels, waiting for something to appear in the distance. He doesn't know— something. The front of the carriage or something, bloody horses. *Anything* .

Technoblade should be back today, sometime around fucking *now* actually, and he's fuckin' late right now. Nevermind the blatant delay. He saw Technoblade in Visoria *days* ago. He should have been back at least yesterday!

He feels something shift beside him, and he turns to look at Sam who seemed to be amused at Tommy's admittedly antsy state. Tommy glares, a pout forming. "What." He snaps at him, tugging his hand lightly downward, and Sam shakes his head.

"Nothing, nothing, it's just so endearing to see you so excited for your brother to return." Sam says with an adoring voice, one that Tommy finds unbearably annoying.

"I'm not excited!" Tommy says, and he could easily tell that Sam isn't even *trying* to look convinced. This is dumb, and stupid, and he's the prince but he's being mercilessly bullied right now and he will not stand for this.

Before he could get a word out, Sam's head snaps forward. Tommy blinks, and he turns his head towards where Sam is looking at only to witness the clacking hooves of the horses against the smoothened palace pavement.

Tommy nabs his hand from Sam's and he runs for it. He doesn't really have anything in mind when he runs, he just does. In hindsight, maybe Tommy should have waited. It's not like that carriage is going anywhere other than the entrance where he witnessed Technoblade depart.

But he doesn't think he can wait any longer.

While it had been fun, it's been the slowest he's ever lived in his life, and he's keen on returning it to normal it as soon as he can.

Tommy runs, and miraculously he doesn't trip once at all. He could hear the growing volume of the hooves and the set of footsteps that are frantically trailing after him. He could hear Sam saying how dangerous it is to be in the way of the horse, but Tommy knows his way his horses. Horses are smart, and they know respect even if it came in the form of a child.

The footman who had been controlling the carriage had pulled in the reins, and the horses end up slowing down. They're a good distance away from the entrance of the palace, which is to say they're at the portion where it's just all path and less facade.

The carriage door is opened, and swiftly he sees someone go down. He sees those annoyingly familiar locks of pink hair. His face turns, and he sees those stupid red eyes.

Tommy speeds up, leaning forward more as he runs and uncaring if he trips. Why should he care, when right in front of him is Technoblade.

And that man, no matter how much of a pig bastard he is, would never let Tommy fall.

As if fate was testing that statement, Tommy's foot hooks into something that was uneven in the brick pathway. To be fair, it's a miracle he hasn't tripped a lot early on into this little sprint of his.

The little prince is proven right once again when he doesn't feel the impact of the ground, rather he feels the collision of a very large pair of arms. Yeah, that's right, he won't ever fall with this man around.

Tommy looks up, and he has a smug grin on his face. It doesn't take any more prompt for Technoblade to pull him into his arms and into a carry.

"Why does it feel like you had counted on tripping?" He hears that drawl, and Tommy feels that sense of completion in his chest again. It feels like he's whole, hearing that voice again after so long.

He tilts his head, though, pretending to be none the wiser. He shrugs, and he bumps his head on Technoblade's. "I missed you." Tommy said. Genuine, not for the first time.

The subtly playful look on Technoblade's eyes soften, and there's the smallest twist at the edge of his lips. "Really?" He asks, and Tommy wants to punch him. That sounded like he only wanted Tommy to repeat that.

"I'm not saying it again." Tommy tilts his head back and rams against Techno's a little harder.

That was apparently not in Tommy's best interest, seeing that while Tommy's got a hard head, Technoblade is more stubborn in every sense— even physically.

Technoblade huffs something similar to a laugh, and he rubs Tommy's head soothingly while he's got that smug expression on his face. "Yeah, I think you said it enough in those letters." He says, and Tommy feels himself redden.

It looks like Wilbur really did go through with his promise.

"One bit of constructive criticism," Technoblade grabs something from his pocket, and he hands something cylindrical to Tommy's hand. "Your letters would look better with an official stamp."

He looks at it, and he sees it. It's a wax-stamp, metal at one end with the imperial crest and three crowns, and sapphire at the other where he's expected to hold it. Tommy blinks, remembering how from somewhere.

Tommy gasps, realizing that this came from Visoria. It's from the shop where Technoblade had left the red-haired Tommy last. This is what he was getting. The metal part must have been custom. He looks behind Technoblade, and he sees familiar items.

When the youngest looks up, he sees that subtly smug expression on his dumb pig face.

“I think you should put me down.”

“Hm, I’d rather not.”

Tommy rolls his eyes before he stabs his chin at Technoblade’s shoulder. He kicks him, but he knows that the pig bastard would likely feel no pain at all.

With his head slotted at the crook of Technoblade’s shoulder, he’s secure in the fact that Technoblade’ cannot see his expression.

Though the same doesn’t apply for everyone else who witnesses the beaming smile on the little Prince’s face. Tommy holds the stamp tight.

Home feels complete.

Chapter End Notes

This was supposed to be a benchtrio-centric chapter.

But I missed Bedrock bros far too much for me not to just flat out slam his presence into this chapter HAHAHAHAH

Anyways did any filipinos catch the obscure reference here HAHLDKASJDFL
THE VISORIA SORRY I GOT SO LAZY WHEEZE

Carrots and Paper Pigs

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Perhaps William was far too naïve for his own good. He's sly, and smart, and he knows how to play the game of politics, but there is only so much that even the most talented man in the world can be capable of. He'd wanted to go on the path of his father. Peaceful in his endeavors. He was able to unify these vast lands with such a whit of violence. Phil was someone William had looked up to, and he had thought that Technoblade was the same.

But William is prisoner in his own home, the death of his younger brother lingering in the air he breathes. There is no scent of blood. That is not right. Something so gruesome shouldn't have been wiped clean so easily. There is no remnant of Theseus anywhere. Not even in the garden he'd cared for on his own.

Where the grass had once been green lies concrete and pathways.

There are no buttercups in the garden.

Theseus had loved buttercups.

Technoblade had declared these flowers weeds.

His heart despairs for a brother lost, and where the light and gentle sparks of hope once flickered flows the unnecessary flood of hatred. It dries eventually, leaving nothing behind. Numbness. Emptiness where the love for family should have taken its seat.

"My prince." There's a familiar voice. William looks up, and there is a cloaked man. He doesn't belong in the palace, William recognizes that much. His gaze travels to the brooch at the stranger's heart, where there rests a symbol of what he lost. Of what had stoked the flames that will win the rebels the war.

Three buttercups—one wilted, and the other two stand strong. All are brought together by a single sapphire.

William's eyes harden, taking not a moment longer to process the hidden pathway opened in his room where there had once been a wall. He stands, and he takes the hand of the intruder of the palace. The wall closes behind him, and a torch now lights the way as he goes through twists and turns around the palace he swore to burn.

He has decided that maybe he is just as ill-fitting for this damned castle as this rebel.

Technoblade looks like he's a lot more stressed since he'd returned to the palace. It didn't take a genius to see that, and Tommy definitely is a genius so he knows that *something* must have happened recently for him to suddenly be like this.

He did comment how Tommy is one of the most observant people he knows (no, he didn't word it like that but Tommy is taking that damned compliment by force).

Tommy slides a piece of parchment towards Technoblade, something that he's been working hard on for a while now. "You look stressed, here have a carrot, calm yourself." he says.

It's, unremarkably, a drawing of a carrot made from parchment that Technoblade had bought for Tommy and a box of crayons of which he has double of. Ginger Tommy (the one that Technoblade saw back in the Visoria) has been given a lot of gifts, and a lot of them are stashed in Ranboo's quarters since Tommy couldn't just dump them into Tubbo's hands willy-nilly. His caretakers would have been very suspicious of the kid for acquiring a lot of things he shouldn't have had in the first place.

Technoblade grabs the piece of paper with a very *well-drawn* carrot on it. "I don't see how a carrot could be very calming, Theseus." He notes.

He shrugs. "I believe it's the thought. I hear the sentiment matters a lot more than anything else."

The older prince hums, "Sentiment."

"I mean, this carrot could mean anything." Tommy points. "For all I care, I could be giving this to your enemies as an 'I hate You' carrot and the meaning would still be delivered. It's the thought." He says.

"Symbolic, then." Technoblade says. "I think the word you're looking for, Theseus, is symbolic."

"Yeah!" Sure, whatever, the two of them are making senseless conversation out of a *carrot* . "So, are you calmer yet?"

Technoblade leans on his hand, observing the piece of parchment. Wordlessly, he gets Tommy and places him on his lap. He points at the piece of paper, "Maybe. Sign it."

Confused but compliant, he signs the paper. "Okay, why?"

"So I don't forget that carrots from you mean good things."

Tommy raises an eyebrow. "I said that it meant *calm* . Not *good things* ." He grabs the paper, finishing his very complex signature.

Technoblade looks at what he's written, and he furrows his eyebrows, confused. "Your name is Theseus, not—" he turns his head, and it almost looks comical how he looks so perplexed at the words. "Not *Tommyinnit* ."

"Tommy's my name too!"

“Where did ‘Innit’ come from?”

“My name is Tommy, *innit* ?” He flashes a grin, almost a smirk. Tommy could see how Technoblade’s face turns deadpan while he snatches the paper from under his palms.

Technoblade pulls out a drawer and he places the drawing into it. He peeks at the slight revelation at what’s under that very secret drawer, and he sees something familiar.

“You have still have my portrait of you!” Tommy accuses. “I thought you threw it out!” He grabs it from the drawer before Technoblade could shut and deny, and he beams with pride upon seeing his intentionally horrible rendition of a pig with a crown. “You look adorable here!” He laughs.

It had been a while ago. He was a very angry child back then (he still is) and he was still under the assumption that Technoblade was going to kill him. The ideal situation would be to never stoke the fires of Technoblade’s ire, but Tommy being Tommy liked to test the water and prove how much of an idiot he’d be for going off on a kid for drawing a (very adorable, mind you) pig.

Still, the implication that Technoblade was depicted as a *pig* could have caused such an uproar in high society if it had ever gone out. He could imagine the Royal equivalent of a PR nightmare.

“It’s evidence.” Technoblade deadpans.

Tommy blinks. “Evidence of what?” He tilts his head curiously.

“Evidence of your crimes against the crown.”

Tommy scoffs, rolling his eyes. “ *We’re* the crown, dummy! I can’t do wrong to you! Never!” He says, and while it’s true that *Tommy* can’t, he knows full well the things Technoblade would have been capable of doing had he not stubbornly crawled his way into his irritating and stoic affection.

Maybe sometime before, if he had been younger and a lot more blind and stubborn, Tommy would have cowered in fear and assure Technoblade in a more serious, heartfelt way of his loyalty and probably make an on-the-spot oath to never ever do him wrong. Now, though, Tommy is tougher. He trusts a lot easier. It’s better now.

Things are better now.

He looks up, and he sees the fondest look on Technoblade’s expression in a long time. Tommy blinks, unsure what’s going on. Did he say something? He thinks back, ‘I can’t do wrong to you’, yeah that’s right, maybe he’s just emotional over Tommy’s declaration of his loyalty this early on.

“Theseus.” Technoblade calls out of the blue, breaking him out of his stupor. “What have you got in your head? Plans to overthrow me, perhaps?”

Tommy gawks at that. “Never!” He tells Technoblade, scandalized by the suggestion. “I give you a carrot and you accuse me of something like that! The audacity!”

“I’m the Prince. I can be as audacious as I please.”

“So am I! And I am *audaciously* declaring that your accusation is dumb.” Tommy retorts. “Put me down. I can’t be conspiring against the crown if I’m not with my associates.” He says in a mocking voice, sarcasm drowning his tone as he wriggles out of Technoblade’s hold.

Technoblade huffs amusedly. “Associates?”

“I need to have people on my side.”

“And who, pray tell, are these people?”

“I don’t know. I still have to draw them.”

Technoblade finally relents, and he places Tommy down on his feet. He watches as Tommy sits back on the chair he was originally sat at, placing a clean piece of paper on the table for him to start drawing. Technoblade set aside the parchment he had been reading through initially, watching Tommy as he scribbles on his paper.

“Those are certainly quite the terrifying line up of conspirators, Theseus.” Technoblade drawls. The sarcasm is clear as day in his tone. “I have a good feeling that this might be your most successful endeavor yet.”

Tommy scoffs. “Yeah! I’ll push you out of that fancy chair, just you wait, brother.” Tommy continues.

“Why are you interested in ‘pushin’ me off the fancy chair’, Theseus?”

“So you can rest.” Tommy grins. “You look very tired. If I conspire against you doing work then it means you get to hang out more with me!”

“We’re ‘hangin’ out’, aren’t we?”

Tommy looks up, eyes serious. “You don’t look very calm.” Tommy points at Technoblade with a red crayon, one that he had been drawing a sash with. “I’m conspiring against the crown, demanding that my brother gets a rest day. A break.”

Technoblade hums. “Looks like you have to work hard to save your brother from the crown, then, Theseus.”

“I’m on it! Don’t rush me, geez, I’m only seven!”

This, for one, ends up the most pleased Technoblade has been since Tommy ever remembers. He *laughed* at that exclamation. Tommy looks up, and he sees, dare he say, *mirthful* eyes looking back at him. It’s the least stoic that he’s seen Technoblade be and it’s something that Tommy can’t help but feel proud of.

Things are different now, he knows that. Things are different, and Tommy has to keep going.

Tommy grins back. “Look at that, seems like I’ve got a bit of progress huh?” He puffs his chest, proud. “Step one of the very wiley plans I have in mind has been accomplished.”

“And what was step one?”

“You’re smiling!”

Technoblade blinks, the smile dropping but face still bare with emotions apparent. He looks shocked, surprised, as if he hadn’t known that he was smiling.

The expression on his face mellows out.

“Looks like you’re quite the worthy adversary, then.”

“Of course I am!” Tommy crosses his arms. “I’m your brother! We’re blood– if nothing’s impossible for you, nothing’s impossible for me!”

Technoblade’s expression is soft, unguarded– maybe it’s the fact that there are only two of them in the room, maybe it’s the fact that no one else is there to witness it but Tommy, or maybe, just maybe, it’s because of Tommy.

Who is he kidding?

Tommy knows it as it is. He’s got the Blood Prince wrapped around his finger.

Somethings have changed since Technoblade returned. There are more people around, and Sam’s presence around Tommy seems more permanent than ever. He had hoped it’d be different now that Technoblade is back, but with the sudden influx of people around with unfamiliar uniforms, Tommy had recognized that there’s a need for him to be with Sam at all possible occasions.

He looks at their uniforms, and something sinks in Tommy’s guts with the recognition.

Ages ago he had asked Puffy where everyone had been. That wasn’t because of childish assumptions. It was because he knew what to look for, and oddly enough none of it had been present at the time.

But here they are. They walk around the Imperial Palace within their own groups, often accompanied by guards that Tommy doesn’t recognize. He sees them all place their hand on their chest upon the recognition of Sam and the Prince, and pass by without much else.

The first few days, Tommy wouldn’t have questioned it. They get people here from time to time, visitors and noble guests.

Except he's seeing the same faces again, and more than once. Recurring greetings and voices that normally shouldn't be as frequent or often than intervals of weeks or months— now he sees them nearly every day or other day.

Something has happened. Tommy has no idea what, but for some reason some more people have been hired into higher positions in the palace.

This is exactly the palace that William from Prince of Song had mentioned in his thoughts, the description of a buzzing palace that never dies in activity, circling around the prince who rules the empire. William was one of them, at one point.

Except he isn't supposed to be this time around.

Tommy turns around, walking towards Sam who is always behind him as he's being escorted. At the moment, Tommy is going across the castle from Ranboo's tower so he could get to his lectures. Sam has become a more permanent part in his life despite how often he's antagonized the man. Somehow he's still loyal to Tommy— he can't be too sure of that. It may seem that he's loyal to *him* but ultimately Tommy still knows that between him and Technoblade, Sam would choose the older royal.

But still, as of now, Tommy has Sam in his grasps. The leash still lingers around him, and Tommy is certain that for the time being that Sam wouldn't be capable of betraying him.

"Sam," Tommy calls, and Sam kneels on one knee so he could be on eye-level with the young prince. He tenses at the sight, looking around to see people staring at the two of them. He could see them whispering, and he could see something behind their eyes that Tommy isn't certain what of.

They're talking about him, that much he's certain.

"Your Highness," He acknowledges,

Tommy looks back at Sam, and he's sure that there's this conflicted look on his face. "Why are there suddenly so many people around as of late?" Tommy questions, "I— Well, I don't remember there being this much people in those robes around back then."

Sam nods, "Well, somethings have been brought into the concern of the prince that made him require the aid of the people." He answers, and Tommy's gut sinks.

The palace, the Stage of the Prince of Song, was once desolate and undecorated with the side-characters. Maids and servants were nothing, like still-life props in a theatre. Now the canon-fodders are around, and the stage is being set with the more distinct details.

It's coming, then. All the problems in Prince of Song is crawling up into the light of the stage. Tommy used to be one of them, but he's really part of the audience.

No, not the audience. Not anymore. With all his involvement.

Well, Tommy is the *director* .

“Who are here, then?” Tommy questions.

“Pardon?”

“What did brother need? Scribes? Treasurers and auditors? Public relations?”

Sam blinks, not really expecting this much question. Instead, he looks at the side, and Tommy spots that familiar fear and avoidance that the servants of the palace had once shared among each other when in the presence of the Warden.

Now the servants don’t share this expression— they’re confident in the protection of their prince. These people, however, are new. Strangers. Untrained in the kindness of royalty—specifically of Tommy’s kindness. Prime knows that he’s the one who hardcarries all the kindness on his back.

“I’m afraid I’m not very familiar with their uniforms and numbers. Someone else had been assigned to this information.” Tommy is... astounded. Sam was Technoblade’s right hand. This meant that he carried nearly half of Technoblade’s weight in running the Empire and that included all the information. Then again, he hasn’t been around Technoblade for a while, biding all of his time beside Tommy.

Something feels wrong about this setting— it’s like Sam has become insignificant in the grand scheme of things.

“You,” Sam calls out, and Tommy could practically hear the ‘Eep!’ that the person expresses upon being pointed at. “Come over here and explain something to the Second Prince.” Sam commanded.

Tommy, already used to this treatment, rolls his eyes, and pats Sam’s leg admonishingly. “No need to be so harsh.” He berates Sam, who doesn’t really look apologetic. “I’m just curious about something, don’t be so strict on the newcomers.” He says, both placating and berating.

This time, Tommy steps in front of Sam confidently. “Hello—”

“G-Greetings and Glory to the Blood of the Antarctic Empire!” The person bows,

It’s... been a while since he’s had this treatment. A lot of the people who bows at him do it a lot more casually, save for Schlatt’s frequent accomplices who Sam makes sure to intimidate. “At ease,” He waves off. “I’m just curious, no need to be so serious.” Tommy smiles, “Can I ask what your job is?” He questions, making sure to keep that amicable air about him.

“I’m an auditor within the Royal Treasury division, sir.”

There are divisions now. If that’s the case, then—

“The old system is returning?” Sam blurts out, and Tommy raises his eyebrows at the idea.

Old system?

As far as he knows, this is new. William in the Prince of Song had said so. Divisions between Treasury, Industrial, and State— as an independent Empire, *totally* independent Empire, mind you, the Empire had no need for a *state* division and had focused solely on Treasury.

Even *Tommy* , as advanced in his studies as it is, does not recall ever being told that there were Divisions *before* .

Then again, the novel hadn't said that the Divisions were an innovative system of the Empire. William had only noted that they were *newly implemented* .

The auditor nods, and Tommy feels like he's the one who knows the least within this crowd. He doesn't like this feeling.

It feels vulnerable to know *nothing* . Easily, Tommy will have to change that.

“What do you mean by the old system?” Tommy asks, only to be faced with a Sam who he knows all too well.

A Sam who *hides*.

“Nevermind,” he says, staring at the Auditor, and Tommy hears a very evident *gulp* .

The auditor bows his head. “If I may be dismissed, Prince Theseus, I have to depart for my job.”

Tommy nods, and the Auditor is given a sign to leave.

He and Sam resume their walk.

“Can I meet Techno later?” Tommy asks, “Probably after my lectures, I just wanna flex my very amazing skills of the arts and crafts.”

While normally Tommy would be able to get an immediate alright, Sam is quiet, as if he's thinking. That was a question that required no thinking. “I'm not too sure this time, Tommy.”

Tommy blinks.

What the fuck?

“Why not?” He asks, trying not to pour his ire into his voice— he succeeds tremendously. Tommy is a sly lil shit, a wonderful actor if he does say so himself. Instead, he sounds genuinely curious— he is, but internally there's a certain irritation in this small body.

The man had just come back at least two weeks ago.

Tommy has only seen him *thrice* .

“Prince Technoblade is rather occupied for the rest of the afternoon, but I do believe that you can join him for dinner.” Sam says. At least he's still important enough to know that much.

“Occupied with what?”

“He has a meeting.”

“With whom?”

“Nobility from the East.”

Tommy blinks. “What’s their business with my brother?” He asks, pausing. This should sound familiar, and he has to confirm it. There were many issues presented in Prince of Song, and a lot of it comes from the Empire that had started to become a lot bolder.

“There isn’t a definitive one yet.” Sam answers. “As far as I can recall, the Imperial Prince Technoblade is holding an audience with the people of the lower tiers of the working system.” He says, “Instead of holding audiences with the Dukes themselves, he’s now personally hearing out the Marquises and Barons of the Empire.”

He hums, “Still the nobles, then?”

“Still the nobles.”

Tommy bites the inside of his cheek. “Did something happen that caused the sudden change in environment in the Emerald Palace?” He questions Sam,

“What makes you ask that?”

“If meeting with the Dukes was alright back then, then it means something must have happened for you guys to change tactic like this. It can’t have happened all willy-nilly.” He says, and when he looks up he sees Sam with a curious look on his face. Tommy, quite frankly, feels offended at the look. “I learned a lot during class, of course I know!” Tommy scoffs, crossing his arms.

Sam blinks, then he laughs. “I apologize for this lapse, my prince. I won’t do it again.” He says, but it doesn’t feel very sincere and a lot more placating than anything. This fucking sucks.

Why can’t he grow up faster so he could be taken more seriously?

“But I do have to ask, did your teacher say that outright?”

Tommy thinks back. Not that he recalls, really. A lot of what he’s asking is based on his information of the Prince of Song, which is to say his impeccable and technical foresight. He’s asking these questions because he’s now certain of what point he is in the Prince of Song *prior* to when the novel had actually started.

In *in medias res* fashion, the Novel had presented a lot of the political turmoil through flashbacks or glimpses in William’s mind.

One of the things he’s learned is that William would have taken a great interest in this growing chaos, since the primary Duchy being affected would have been the East. William,

despite having been position in the South prior to the beginning of Prince of Song, had loved the Eastern Duchy the most.

Fortunately his wealth in knowledge of this was found out by Duke Schlatt, and this eventually led to the proceeding of the Schlatt Ducal house's plan for William— to use him as a bargaining chip in the face of the Imperial Prince to gain more power.

Un fortunately, William was as wily as his surrounding menaces. He had been able to free himself from Schlatt's influence sometime in the middle of the novel.

But William's personal relationships aside, Tommy doesn't really quite give a fuck about that *at the moment* since now he's going to have to figure out a way to present the truth that there is, in fact, no risk of famine in the East.

And he knows this for certain because it would have been William who found out about it, leading to the Prince of Blood's growing trust in the brunette.

Also leading to yet another slaughter of Nobility, one that William couldn't expect. It happened so quickly, but at the same time it had made sense at the time— the East had siphoned much of the wealth of the Empire, making it more difficult to manage under such limited funds and self-instated independence from any other country.

On one hand, it should have been good— it's like a clean slate, after all.

Except *of course* it'd have its consequences. This slaughter had also lead to *an entire domino effect of a power vacuum in the East*. The already unwell Duchess of the East had fallen, and the East had nearly fallen had William not intervened. Tommy is *not* interested in this event happening in the future, so he's going to have to figure out a middle ground. First things first, though, is that he needs a man in the inside.

He thought he had it, except now he's realized that with his clinging, somehow the man in the inside had been pulled out. Sam needs to take a firmer and more permanent role by Technoblade's side and not Tommy's. He doesn't know how he could do it considering that the man is here by Technoblade's order, but he's going to have to find a way to make Sam important again.

It's not like he'd need Sam anyway. People wouldn't go after him like they did with William, he was posing to be a pain in the ass the moment he was revealed to be of Royal Blood. Tommy, however, can be certain that this same thing won't happen to him. He's harmless. A younger prince with barely any political influence— no one would be plotting for his life by the end of this.

"We've arrived, my prince." Sam announces.

Maybe he could get some of Wilbur's opinions of the happenings in the palace.

“Well, I guess this does mean that something must have happened if they’d imported manpower to the palace.” Wilbur hums, placing a hand on his cheek. “Typically it could mean a lot of things, but the main thing that comes to mind is that the current Dukes and the Imperial Prince himself have got a lot on their plates that it requires them to move at a more efficient, albeit riskier rate.”

Tommy blinks. “Why would it be risky?” He tilts his head. “Wouldn’t more manpower ensure that not a lot of things go wrong?” It’s what brought Wilbur to Technoblade in the first place. The influx of manpower was supposed to help Technoblade’s case, wasn’t it?

“Well, the primary reason that The Imperial Prince had mandated that he work with minimal manpower at first was because there were very few people he could trust at the time– and these few, little they may seem in number, work efficiently and, more importantly, secretly.” Wilbur says. “They’ve got a wide set of skills and work directly under the watch of the Imperial Prince.”

He could appreciate that, to be fair. Tommy gets it. Privacy and not having too many people who could mess up around you. It’s a good thing, sure, but some sacrifices in safety have to be made for the sake of efficiency.

Which is likely why he’s seeing a *lot* more of Sam as of late.

Tommy has to find a way around that somehow. He can’t just recruit Puffy because then he’d be a burden. Then again, Puffy could do her duties in the palace contrary to what she’s doing at the moment. There’s not much trouble in the West, fortunately enough.

That is, there’s not much trouble *at the moment*. If the situation in the East, the primary cause for the domino-effect shit-fest that is the events of Prince of Song, is handled before it could get any bigger, then Tommy won’t have to stress over his omniscience that everything is going to go South.

Literally.

The Southern Duchy is going to get fucked up by a combination of Invaders and Rebellion members because of the sudden jam in the system that was so neatly created by the Royal Family. Due to their lack of natural resources, everything they have that they need to survive is all the way up in the North and East. No matter how much more abundant they are in the crafts of jewelry and mining, it isn’t worth anything as long as they have nothing to trade it for.

This would force the Southern Duchy to open the borders.

That, in fact, is a horrible idea considering the *future* political climate.

None of these, however, are things that he could so easily point out. Unless he says these as *hypothetical* situations.

“My brother is meeting up with leaders from the Eastern Duchy.” Tommy says. “I don’t think I trust them very much.”

Wilbur blinks at the sudden remark. “What makes you so?”

Tommy hums, “Well, they seem to be presenting a lot of problems to Technoblade, but they don’t seem very real to me.” He says, “Like, I get that if there’s a problem within the duchy, the first to know would be the inhabitants, but the East is something different no?”

“Yes, that’s true. Issues within the East, unless related to things beyond their primary concern, are often evident from the very beginning. I remember some statistical analyses being encouraged from within the duchy as led on by the Duke, Niki.” Wilbur says. “But if it’s agriculture that’s the concern, then something like that isn’t so quick to rise out of the blue. With the advancements in the East heralded by the Duchess herself, there’s nothing to be *immediately* concerned about that should be brought in the attention of the Imperial Prince. Nothing alarming that they can’t handle.”

Tommy knows that, and Technoblade in the Prince of Song had also known that. This is what led to the blood bath in the first place, as well as one of the initial stirrings of the Rebellion that made Wilbur overthrow Technoblade.

“So if they pull some bullshit like ‘oh, we’ve reached unexpected famine’, what’s going on?”

“Either corruption or invasion.” Wilbur shrugs. “Though I think that if the primary concern was famine due to lost lands, then invasion would have likely been a concern brought up to the West. Why are you asking so many things?”

“Because I think it’s odd how people like the Duchess Niki won’t be in the meeting.” Tommy answers, which seems like a nonchalant answer, but he knows that this should raise a few red flags in Wilbur’s mind.

And it does. Tommy sees the alarm in Wilbur’s eyes, and he could see how it darkened into something similar to Technoblade’s anger. Actually, less so on anger and more so on irritation. Wilbur looks very irritated.

“Oh,” He says.

“You don’t look very pleased.”

“I don’t think I am, actually.”

Tommy grins, leaning in. “Tell you what, you dismiss me right now with a few pointers on how to fuck up some people’s evening and I will point out their mistake very early.” He suggests, and Wilbur looks like he’s actually considering it.

“You’re suggesting that I let you out of the lecture period for the sake of some political intervention?”

“Less so on political and more so on little-shit.” Tommy shrugs, but he waves it off. “Point is that I’m a smart little guy, and I don’t trust those fuckers.”

Wilbur sighs, “You should really work on your language.” He says, “If anyone were to hear you, I’d get my head lopped off.”

“I’m not hearing a no.”

“It’s not a no.” There’s a mischievous gleam in Wilbur’s eyes. “This is, in fact, a very blatant and obnoxious *yes* .” He’s grinning now. There it is, now he at least knows that they’re related somehow. Little shit energy is shared between the two of them, Tommy knows it.

Tommy brings colorful paper from out of a satchel he often brings for lecture periods. It’s paper and stationery that he got as a gift from Technoblade back when he’d just returned. “I have a plan, but I’m gonna have to run it by you.”

Wilbur looks at the paper, and back at Tommy. “Sometimes it frightens me how intuitive you are, you know?”

The young blond laughs. “Good! I’m a scary big man.” He says,

There’s a hand on his head, something that Tommy has grown accustomed to despite having spent less time being with Wilbur as of late. The brunet is smiling, and Tommy is *not* happy with the soft hours.

“Sure you are.” He says fondly, and honestly, fuck him for being a good brother. He is doing a horrible job at *pretending* that he’s *not* his brother, which should be the goal. Tommy has no idea how Theseus from Prince of Song had missed out on the fact that Wilbur is his brother. Maybe it’s a hindsight-is-20-20 type of thing, but anyone who has two eyes should have been blind not to see this blatant act of fraternal intimacy.

Tommy doesn’t make an effort to remove said hand, however. No it is *not* because he *likes* it. No, Tommy is not blanking out on Wilbur because of this affectionate act. FUCK YOU.

“Now, let’s learn how to fuck up some suspicious, probably corrupt officials.”

Yes, please, move on.

Tommy is stood right in front of a specific set of doors. These aren’t the doors to the throne room. These aren’t at all gaudy, but they’re definitely underwhelming. Tommy withholds a smirk,

Yeah, leave it to Technoblade to provide nothing but *underwhelming* hospitality to a bunch of low-life nobles who don’t like to get off their asses to help. Nobility, the government, they are *public servants* , not the people that the public serves.

Well, that should exclude Technoblade.

He’s not sure where the pig bastard stands, but he does at least have *some* sort of judicial system that he’s keeping strict on. That’s good at least (?).

He crosses his arms, debating on whether or not he should knock.

“Your highness,” Tommy hears from behind him, but he doesn’t give any recognition to the sound on purpose. He won’t be swayed. He has to do this. This is one step into the righteous path of Tommyinnit’s Future. “Tommy.” He hears a sigh, one that makes Tommy’s ears perk up.

Tommy turns this time, and he sees a reluctant but *resigned* look on Sam’s face. “Yes?” He says with a grin.

“Fine. But if I get scolded—”

“You won’t!” Tommy waves off. “You’re under *my* orders, I’m pulling political corruption!”

“I’m starting to doubt if you’re learning any good under your teacher.” Sam grumbles.

The blond laughs. “Oh, don’t worry, this is all me.” Which is technically true. Tommy pulling Sam into his scheme definitely is *his* idea, Wilbur had been, quite frankly, against this route of plan. Tommy had convinced the other that this would be better, seeing that there’s no plan where Sam wouldn’t be clinging to Tommy like they’re stuck by the hip.

Tommy turns towards the door yet again, this time, a lot more confident. With that obnoxious, loud voice, he commands from the diaphragm:

“Open the door!”

Without shame nor hesitation, he makes a scene to slam open the doors loud and wide (courtesy of Sam, who had been subject to his Tom-foolery. Thank fuck for taller larger people to slam doors open for him. That’s one of the primary perks of being a prince, really.) Tommy *knows* for a fact that all the attention is on himself, and he thrives on that shit.

Tommy runs to the seat Technoblade took when he entered, ignoring the others who were in that same cabinet. Perhaps ages ago he would have worried if he’d crossed a line, but ever since Tommy has toed the line time and time again and discovered that toeing it does *not* result in being beheaded— well, Tommy’s always had a penchant for being a little shit.

Because he abhors everyone in this room (save for one, but it would take a trip to hell and back for him to ever admit it—ignore the fact that he already has, *Tommy has not admitted this fact*. The bastard will have to reclaim his favor by hard and gruelling work.) and he can and will fuck up everything about it.

“Tech!” Tommy says, running. Yeah, make a scene. Take his attention off of these corrupt fucks. It would take them *ages* to get an audience from Techno ever again.

Now he just needs to find a way to convince Technoblade to blow this popsicle stand and *get* .

The rest of the nobles in the room stand, alarmed at the speedy ball of gold and reds running at mach speed towards the Imperial Prince. They all gasp, “Your Imperial Highness—!” They sound concerned, as if something dangerous was coming their way.

Some reach towards him to catch him, but he’s too quick for their dainty polished hands.

In one swift motion of him moving to stand up while meeting Tommy who is moving at him at totally incomprehensible speeds, Tommy finds that his feet are in the air and that all of a sudden he's carried by an already standing Technoblade.

Tommy looks around, and—

For some reason, the nobles are gawking at him. Tommy tilts his head curiously. He doesn't know why he's garnered this sort of reaction.

One of them blinks, and immediately the single one who snaps out of their stupor bows immediately.

“Glory forever to the blood of the Antarctic Empire!” They exclaim, and the rest follows soon after, as if realizing a mistake. That's odd.

Technoblade hums a displeased sound. Tommy doesn't really get why.

“Looks like your time to convince me is up.” He says, carrying Tommy at his side. He doesn't know, he's a lot more focused on the fact that things are not going as how he expected, but in the direction that he wanted it to go. “The answer is tentative, seeing that I haven't been given an appropriate amount of information for this scale of a project.”

Holy shit, he actually succeeded and all he did was ask Sam to slam the doors open.

“But—” The impetuous count who spoke up had been met with a very intimidating stare. That one shuts up, only to have his sentiments be caught and salvaged by another.

“Your Imperial Highness, I implore you to consider again.” Another one says despite being met with the same, cold treatment. Oh, this one was ballsy. “The situation in the East will cause collateral damage in the near future.”

But Tommy's got the upper hand, bitch. He pulls something from his coat, and he's a tad bit disheartened that it's crumpled slightly but he offers it to the man carrying it anyway. “Psst, hey, Tech, look what I made today.” Tommy says, easily taking the prince's attention.

It's a small paper pig, folded to the best of Tommy's knowledge and abilities. He put a little cut out crooked crown on top and stuck it on its head. It's a thinly veiled insult but also Tommy *knows* Technoblade would think it adorable.

Ah, there it is, it's working. He's seeing a lightness on his eyebrows, like whatever had weighed those poor, stressed fuckers down had gained some support. Yup, leave it to Tommy to soothe Technoblade's troubles,

If for just a moment, that is.

“Ages from now, the crops will fail, and famine will strike.” One member of the audience had spoken up. It's a woman, brazen in her words. She almost sounds certain. “Just by supporting the research we can find alternatives for the amount of grain that we might lose. We might learn more of the resiliency of our crops. The environment is changing but the grain we care for are unable to adapt to such drastic—”

“Drastic?” Tommy questions, and some people’s eyes light up. They’re looking at Tommy like he’s their salvation. He looks to Technoblade. “That’s sudden, right?” he plays dumb.

Technoblade doesn’t look very amused. “You’re smart, Theseus, don’t play dumb.” He answers. “But yes, it means that there’s a sudden change, one that’s unanticipated.” He answers.

Tommy blinks, feigning dumbness. He could see Technoblade’s suspicious gaze resting on Tommy, like he’s expecting the kid to do something stupid.

“Is that bad?” Tommy asks the one noble.

A kind looking one, one that seems to look like she’s good with kids, speaks up: “Yes, I’m afraid.” She says softly. “The animals, for one, will suffer from the consequences of this famine.” The Lady looks at the folded pig in Tommy’s hands. “Oh, the poor pigs.”

He frowns, “The pigs!” Tommy looks back to Technoblade in faux concern. “Well that can’t be good.” Tommy hums. “That’s not good, right Techno?” He asks his brother, loudly whispering.

“I suppose not.” He responds, but he sounds far from convinced. Good. Everyone *but* Technoblade is supposed to buy into this farce.

One of them clears their throat, looking at Tommy like he’s struck gold. Tommy internally laughs— this dumbass thinks that Tommy is going to be easily swayed? He’s got another thing coming, poor fucker. “Which is why we, us nobles from the East, were suggesting a research project for—”

“Why not give off some responsibility to the North?” Tommy cuts him off, sudden in his response. The nobles were struck quiet one second, then this turned into something a lot more *ridiculous* . He watches as they all exchange amused glances with one another. They’re looking at him like he’s a kid. Tommy, though already expecting it, feigns indignance, and he turns towards Technoblade with such expression. “Is that such a silly suggestion?” Tommy questions,

He doesn’t give the nobles an opportunity to speak. “I mean, if you say that the climate and stuff in the *East* are *drastically* changing, wouldn’t it be better to shift the responsibility to somewhere more stable? I hear from a friend of mine that the tropics in the North aren’t too bad, the soil isn’t nothing to laugh at either and—”

Technoblade hums sitting Tommy on his hip while he positions himself on the chair. “You’re loud today, Theseus.” He says. “I see your lectures have been paying off well as of late.”

Tommy grins, turning to his older brother. “You always told me that I’m way too smart for my own good!” He chirps out, and he looks back towards the displeased nobles. “I mean, one day I wanna help my brother out when things go haywire— the Northern Duchy could help you out if things are as bad as you say they are. I have a very good friend there! I can write a letter for you guys!” Tommy smiles, and he watches as their own smiles turn a lot stiffer, a lot more forced and *polite* .

They don't know that Tommy is quite literally saving their lives. Then again, they don't have reason to believe that their lives were at stake in the first place.

"Of course," One tries to say. "We just thought that it'd be better to kick-start things so that we don't have to go through such measures—"

"We can discuss more in the future." Technoblade cuts the noble off, and Tommy could see the irked twitch in their eye when they're cut off yet again. They can't say anything about it—Tommy and Technoblade are Royalty. They command no respect in the face of their pairs of eyes. "I am still considering the logistics of it all. Until then, do try to handle the situation in the East with more effort, until Duchess Niki is well enough to visit me herself, I will hold back any decision on this matter." He says,

Which is *exactly* what Tommy wants. Those fools. They thought they could take advantage of this unnamed illness that Niki has taken as of late. In Prince of Song, Their dismissal for the one who is supposed to rule over *them* is one of the things that had caused them to be so obnoxious with their demands—only growing greedier as they realize just how much more they could take advantage of, and Technoblade, with the stress of having to answer to these problems on his own times four, hadn't been able to thoroughly read into these issues himself.

Yes. This is what Tommy plots to do. He will be the wall, the one to hinder these greedy fuckers until he could find a way to get Duchess Niki of the East to *heal faster* .

For one, Wilbur is his finest test subject.

The man ain't ill, but he *hasn't* become ill as of late either. That counts as some points, at least.

The nobles nod, looking like a class that have been told off by the teacher in charge.

Tommy *tries* his hardest not to look smug.

When no one says anything to contest Technoblade's final remarks, he hums approvingly. "Dismissed." He says with finality, finally placing down a hindrance at whatever bullshit they're trying to pull and also putting a huge, *huge* thorn in their asses in the process.

Tommy wins. L to them fuckers trying to fool his brother.

Chapter End Notes

First off, sorry it took so long orz.

It's just that I've got shit on my plate o(-(

This won't take long, promise, but updates among all my fics are gonna be hella sparse haha,,, this is because I nearly lost my scholarship last sem so I'm taking this time to

reprioritize the stuff I've got on the roster. Rest assured that this fic isn't abandoned wheeze, I still love this fic.

Which is to say, I'm grateful for those who are still sticking by and for the ones who pick it up even if I haven't updated in months WHEEZE

Now for less personal notes and more abt WTEF:

This is like half of what i outlined initially for this chapter orz. Not even half, this is like, a fourth or a third of what I had planned. I just thought to get this out early since I haven't updated in a while, which is to say that I'm sorry in advance if there are any inconsistencies HAHAHAHA

As usual, this is unbeta-ed;; The earlier chapters were beta-ed by Whieskey, Vil, and Sock but I'm yet to actually update AO3 for it;; my bad (also thank you guys for helping me out with it <3)

Also also, regarding related works, I am more than happy to welcome any. Like, legit. I'm more than cool with it because the reason why I wrote this is to have something to read within the isekai/reincarnation genre and if you have a fic inspired by my fic by all means please tell me about it (or if you have fic recs, those are HELLA welcome in the comments)

ALSO also also, gonna point at the crack-treated-seriously. This is still crack, still a lot of shenanigans going on, and while it may not make sense there will inevitably still be consequences to Tommy's crack behavior.

Rainfall in the middle of Springtime (April Fools Chapter)

Chapter Notes

It's not april anymore so here's the obligatory "This is an April Fool's prank" message before the chapter WHEEZE

I'm not going to be moving this chapter anywhere because the comments are HILARIOUS and I didn't expect for this chapter to get much reactions LOL. Just remember that anything and all indicated in this chapter IS NOT CANON and therefore RETCONNED. This won't affect future chapters.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Again, going to REITERATE from the NOTES

It's not april anymore so here's the obligatory "This is an April Fool's prank" message before the chapter.

for more info read the author notes (at the beginning and end)

Tommy is running. There are people after him, and they're angry. They're so angry.

He doesn't give them a chance. He can't afford to give them one, not when *he's* after his head.

When he'd caught wind of the news of what happened to his brother after that meeting, he'd known. He'd *known* that he had to run, that he had to flee. He'd already taken Ranboo in custody, Sam has been *detained*. He found out about Puffy.

There's no one on his side anymore.

Tommy wants to sob— between the panic, despair, and grief, he wants to break down, bury himself under the trees where he buried his gold so he could regain that peace and quiet from years ago. He wants to be small again, curl himself at his brother's side, back when he'd melted that cold heart and shed away the title of Blood Prince. Where they shared memories.

But now?

There's *nothing*.

Tommy wants to run back and start all over again. It was worth it. It was worth the near-death experiences, to have a family, a brother who would protect him from the world. Tommy

would do the same. Had done the same. Had prevented the bloodshed and tyranny, corruption swept aside before it could even blossom.

When he'd been declared a genius, a prodigy, at ten years old. When he'd declared himself uninterested in the crowd, shutting down any attempts to overturn the heir. He'd looked at Technoblade's proud eyes and known then and there that red was never supposed to be such a cold color. It's warm, so comfortably warm.

Tommy is sixteen years old now.

Sixteen years old, and forgotten by the very man who he'd remembered *everything* about.

And that man who had forgotten him is out to kill him. He, who was declared a suspect for the Crown Prince's attempted murder.

Tommy would never do such a thing. Never *dare* do such a heinous act.

For the first time in eleven years, Tommy has never felt more like Theseus than *now* .

So Tommy *runs* . His mana had been drained, and he's at his limit, and there's no crossing the borderwalls of the Palace Grounds without the little that he's kept inside of him. He has to run. He has to run, before Technoblade does something that he'd regret.

This will ruin him, Tommy knows that.

So he *runs* .

Tommy is beyond the borders now— he enacts his plan, one that has been intricately traced from when he was five years old. Tommy knows where to go. He has his gold, clinking softly under the coats he's stolen as he ran. He never thought he'd use it, he'd nearly forgotten about it being buried in the courtyard.

What a miracle that he'd forgotten.

The irony— Tommy forgetting things had saved him from Technoblade losing his memories.

It makes him want to laugh. It makes him want to cry.

Three days after. He manages three days to reach the borders of the North. He'd made plans for Tubbo, in the Northern Duchy. Somewhere for him to escape his responsibilities. Tommy had so easily supported his endeavor for escapism. He understood, more than anyone, what it meant.

He knows not to stay there for too long, though. There are traces of his name on the papers. Papertrails, one that Technoblade had willingly turned a blind eye to when Tommy had organized it.

There won't be a blind eye this time.

But he's willing to gamble. The man wouldn't know where to look, after all.

He shouldn't, at least.

But Technoblade has always been such an astounding individual.

He doesn't go too far .

When he's gently set on his knees by the palace guards, at the foot of the throne where such an imposing figure sits, he doesn't dare look up. He doesn't want to see eyes from twelve years ago. He doesn't want to see the man he'd outgrown.

Instead, he focuses on the pattering of the rain against the large and vast windows of the throne room. He listens to the thunder cracking against the air.

"Look at me." The man, a stranger, demands from above a set of stairs. A familiar throne rests on top.

Tommy tries not to remember that there's a nook behind that large throne, how he'd napped there and fluffed pillows at his brother's side. How he'd do incohesive braids at his pink hair.

"Look at me, '*Tommy*' ." The man commands, tone cold and stern and unforgiving and unloving.

It's not difficult to forget the comfort behind the throne when that name is spoken.

It breaks his heart to hear that. A name he'd chosen for himself being used so scaldingly. Tommy abhors the tone, the coldness, the hatred in that voice. But he supposes he's grateful. Technoblade hadn't called him Theseus— a name that Technoblade respected. A name that Technoblade would say softly.

Theseus. His Theseus. His baby brother, Theseus.

Tommy chokes on his breath, tears stinging the edge of his eyes. He looks around, everywhere but *him* , and he sees the bloodied throne room where bodies of his defenders had lain. Cold. Bloody.

The work of the Blood Prince.

"**Tommy.**" He doesn't want to look up and see a matching shade of red in those eyes.

But Tommy has to.

He looks up, and he sees exactly what he'd expected. A cold man. Unfeeling. Unloving. There is no humanity in those eyes, nothing indicative of the man Tommy had grown up seeing. His heart breaks more than it fears.

Was it all for nothing?

Tommy doesn't even need the words to know where his fate lies. It's not like how he first met Technoblade, where it was like a predator playing with its food. This is a predator who thought that it was wronged. This is an unforgiving tyrant, without mercy even for play. He'd extend no mercy, not when he'd figured that before him, at his feet, is a worthy adversary when given the chance.

Tommy knows that he is going to die.

This will ruin Technoblade. Tommy knows that. Whatever spell that has been casted on him, Tommy knows it has to be temporary. He knows that it has to be nothing stronger than a week's long to wear it off.

He should have lasted that long. He should have lasted long enough to have it wear off.

This will ruin him *if* he remembers what he lost.

"What do you plead, Tommy?" Technoblade— no, this isn't Technoblade. This is the Blood Prince. A caricatured villain in a novel. This isn't his brother. This is what his brother *was* , but this isn't his brother. This isn't his Technoblade.

Tommy looks up, eyes watering, but he's shameless in his grief. "Not guilty." He declares.

"You are aware that magic, save for your blood and mine, cannot work within Palace Grounds." Technoblade says to Tommy.

He is. He is aware. This is the very thing that made him the prime suspect of Technoblade's attempted murder. It could only be Tommy, or his accomplice, Ranboo.

Ranboo is dead. Dead before he could come to Tommy's defense.

So there is only Tommy.

"I am."

Technoblade tilts his head. Judge, Jury, Executioner, amused at the cornered prey at his feet.

Tommy tries, repetitively, that this isn't Technoblade. This isn't his brother. This isn't his family.

But it hurts all the same, to see him regarded as nothing but scum who had failed.

Technoblade looks down at him, and he stands from the throne. He descends. Tommy knows not to hope, but he can't. Seeing that face, seeing him, it's impossible not to associate him with good things.

Tommy sobs. He can't help it. The dissonance, between the image of his brother before Tommy and after Tommy, he can't handle it. He can tell them apart but he can't see him as anything other than his brother. His brother, his good brother. His loving brother who laughs at carrots and loves to farm. His brother who has a ridiculous farm in the middle of his estate.

His brother who has a sword unsheathed before him, gleaming in front of Tommy's face.

There's a reflection on it, showing Tommy. So pathetic, weak, useless and unimportant. Stripped of everything that Technoblade had given him.

He looks up, and he tries to see. He sees the strings, muddled around his brother's head, tight but loose enough for it to last another week. He sees cords already so loose, about to let go.

A week from now, the spell will unlatch itself from Technoblade's head. It's too weak to be permanent. Tommy knows that.

This will ruin Technoblade. Tommy knows.

Tommy looks up, eyes wet as he tries to catch those red eyes. "Give me my brother back." He pleads.

Technoblade scowls. "You've already taken more than you should." He retorts. "Anything else you want to say, Tommy?"

He looks down, head bowed and neck exposed. He hopes that this wouldn't hurt. Right now, there are strings unseeable by anyone other than himself, curling around his fingers. He tugs at it, tightening the existent spell around his brother's head.

This will only ruin Technoblade if he remembers.

"I love you, brother." Tommy says, voice wet.

Technoblade huffs. "Still playing at the role, Tommy?" He mocks, all the while the spell marks a permanent spot in his mind. Technoblade is unaware. He's always been unaware of Tommy's prowess for magic, save for now.

Tommy tries not to regret what he's doing.

He would never, in a million years, wish this grief on this brother that he loves.

"You are pathetic."

Those are the last words that Tommy hears when the blade swings down at his neck.

Tommy wakes up, sitting upright on a comfortable bed with a jolt. He looks around frantically, seeing everything be so... big. The ceiling is higher than it should be, and the bed is larger than he remembers— unless...

Unless it's *him* who had gotten smaller.

He looks down at his hands, and he sees how pristine of scars they are.

How there's no scrape, not even a bruise.

He looks at the window, and he sees that drops of water slam against the windowpane, momentum aided by the strong gusts of wind.

Tommy steps down from the overly large bed, and he finds that there's that same clock from his dreams. A time— it's four in the morning. A date— it's April first.

He scoffs.

He'd juked himself, damn it.

Fucking April fools. Damn. Fuck. SHIT.

Tommy grits his teeth, still seven years old (and a half), and he walks out of his room and runs towards his brother's chambers. He knocks aggressively at the door, shouting for his brother.

It doesn't take long. Not at all. Not even a minute, and the door is swung wide open with a frantic Technoblade. His hair is a mess, and so are his clothes, as if he'd rushed to get to the door.

Tommy doesn't really care. This mess, unorganized and messy but still so *human*, is right in front of him. Nothing like his nightmare.

His lips wobble, and something that has been suppressed since he'd woken up starts to bubble over his throat until he ends up sobbing. He reaches up towards his brother, demanding to be carried.

"Theseus?" His voice is groggy, raspy after having just been woken up. Not a moment later he's at his brother's arms, cradled so preciously. He feels like nothing can hurt him anymore. "Theseus, what's wrong?"

Hearing that name only makes him cry more. It's so gentle, so loving and caring. He's so concerned. Tommy can't help but bawl. "I'm scared!" he wails into his brother's shoulder, frantic to keep him close. "I'm so scared!" scared of losing him, of being forgotten, of losing all of this.

There are shushes in his ear. "It's okay, I'm here, Theseus, I'm here." he says, and he feels his hand go up and down against his back in a soothing motion. "Let's sleep here tonight, okay?" He's so gentle. "You're okay, you're safe, brother." There's a kiss against his forehead. It only makes him cry more, wail more and grip tightly at his brother.

"Don't leave me." Tommy whispers, voice shaky.

Technoblade doesn't hesitate to answer. "Never." He says.

The heaviness of his eyes makes him drowsy, and between the soothing presence of his brother's hold, secure, safe, loving and so human, he can't help but fall into the hands of Hypnos. He sleeps.

A/N from April 1:

HAPPY APRIL FOOLS LMFAO I wrote this in 30 minutes between my self-imposed break from reviewing for a major exam tomorrow.

Yeah, this isn't canon LOL. You've been juked.

Anyway, regardless of whether or not this is an april fool's joke, I hope you've enjoyed that 2k words of panic

A/N from May 30:

I'm still gonna keep this chapter up idc idc

Surprises Big and Small

Chapter Notes

this is the first update of this week, the 2nd one will follow on saturday 07
this is VERY unedited due to the fact that I've got like until saturday to complete these two chapters for the event I'm on WHEEZE

I'll edit this later or tomorrow, depends when I drop the next chapter (am halfway thru it)
TWB MCC Prompt: Dimensional travel / trapped in another dimension

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

"No." Wilbur deadpans, cutting right into the middle of his lecture before continuing as if the question wasn't at all asked nor mentioned. Tommy gawks at that, almost offended by the audacity of this man to outright turn down his honest intentions. This is dumb! This is stupid!

"What do you mean no!" Tommy screeches, slamming his hands onto his table. "It's a wonderful idea."

"No means no, Tommy." Wilbur retorts. "While I trust your judgement on most things, I would also like to keep the head I've got on my shoulders, thank you very much." He continues, and he goes on with his lecture like there's nothing wrong with what he's just said, like he hasn't just derailed Tommy's plans for the future!

He huffs, and decides not to listen. He can catch up on his own later, since he's decidedly a very good student, but for today he plans to be the most insufferable student he can be.

"Tommy,"

He crosses his arms on his table, only staring straight on without the intention to really hear him out for anything that isn't a yes or anything like it.

"I am not going out for 'tea time' with your very intimidating brother, Tommy, and I'm sure you know why."

"Yes, but I also know that your assumptions on him is very fucked up and biased!"

Wilbur blinks. "Tommy, I'm certain that if anything, it's your opinion of him that's slightly more skewed and biased." he tells him. "No one in their right mind would dare intrude the small time of day that the Imperial Crown Prince has with the last of his family.

Tommy was about to retort something, but he holds his tongue, remembering that he's not supposed to know. That there's no right way of assuming, and assuming correctly mind you, that Wilbur Soot is the revived Prince of the Empire.

"Okay." Tommy says, and he sits back down on his seat.

"Okay?" Wilbur blinks, "What do you mean 'okay'?"

"I mean I get it." Tommy announces. "I understand where you're coming from, I'll leave it."

Wilbur frowns, as if concerned. "Tommy in the time that I've known you, you aren't the type of person to simply give up like that."

"So you want me to fight it?"

"No, but I know that there's got to be a catch." Wilbur responds snarkily, as if he's got Tommy down and he's got him correctly.

Tommy shrugs, hiding his real emotions under that facade like he's trained himself to do so well. Technically, Wilbur Soot has got him down correctly. He's got plans, one that will lead to another version of this conversation between himself and his royal tutor, but this will require an elaborate step by step process.

And this involves finding a certain set of portraits to prove that he's made the connect.

Prince Theseus will be quickening the plot for the sake of finally reaching the end of this damn dilemma of having to step on eggshells all around them.

.

Tommy is having way too many problems at once. He's biting off more than he can chew. While he's been having a grand time spending it as a prince and not having to do all of these schemes and shit, he can feel the weight of all the things he's procrastinating on start weighing down on his shoulders like it just decided to make his life a living hell.

He has the concern about Duchess Niki, who he wants to send a bracelet to so he could just fix her before they make the East bankrupt and leaving the Empire vulnerable to the war.

There's also the concern about the mentioned war, how he needs to prevent that sometime soon.

And while it isn't as relevant as it should be, there's also the rebellion. Now that he's technically on the 'Royal' side of things, he doesn't want this rebellion to thrive considering that Technoblade is on his side.

He shudders at the thought of having to face the guillotine because of these righteous fuckers. Like, sure, woo fuck the monarchy and all, but can they just, you know, chill? Stop beheading kids maybe? He's the monarchy, please grant him mercy he has literally done nothing wrong (yet, but until then kindly fuck off with the whole viva la revolution).

He has to deal with it one at a time. First thing's first, maintain the peace. The best way to do that is to prevent the common folk from having a reason to join the rebellion in the first place and this meant preventing Duchess Niki from dying.

"Ranboo," He starts off with that voice of his that he knows irritates Ranboo.

The taller boy sighs, as if knowing what Tommy is onto. He doesn't, but he likes to pretend like they've got an equal hand. "What is it, Tommy?" He asks while he continues to work on his weird artifact thing. Tommy thinks that Ranboo is trying to do something like the Enchantment table, but something that's more flexible, pliable.

"Can you do me a favor?"

"Haven't I done enough for you?" He asks, exasperated.

Tommy gasps, "Never!" He says. "Never enough, imagine having to traumatize me for wanting to eat my literal baby."

"That is a racoon--"

"That is Clementine and you're hurting his feelings!" He shouts back. "Come on, I promise it's for the good of the people and all that jazz." Tommy says, "You won't even have to do any magic! It's literally just an innocent delivery-!"

There is a slam on the table-- "You have the literal master of the Mage's Tower of the South, and you want them to do a delivery for you?" They sound like they can't believe Tommy. "You are unbelievable."

"I know, I'm that amazing." Tommy deadpans. "It's just a prototype, but I've got to ward off whatever is killing The Duchess of the East--"

"Wait, pause-- someone is killing the Duchess?" Ranboo drops whatever he's doing to approach Tommy's workbench. He sees a pair of earrings, and the gemstones on it is almost glowing. It'd look unnatural if it weren't for the natural glimmer of the diamonds.

"Yes, get with the program," Tommy sighs, "And I like her and she's cool despite us literally never meeting, so I need you to send this to her with this letter." He says, shoving the jewelry box and the sealed letter inside the folder.

Ranboo makes a surprised sound, trying to catch the items that's being held. "Don't you want me double checking on those earrings first?" Ranboo raises an eyebrow. "This is a prototype, like you said, we don't want anyone being hurt."

Tommy's grin is cruel when Ranboo says that

There's a concerned look on the other kid's face. "We don't want anyone being hurt, right?" He emphasizes on the right.

"Wrong." He says. "Along with that special mending I just added, I put on thorns on that fucker." He says with a grin. "The person trying to poison her isn't going to see what's

coming."

Ranboo blinks. He sets the jewelry aside, and walks to his notebook where he put notes of all the unique enchantments of the table. He mutters as he reads and flips through the books, and finally gasps when he sees it. "That's actually a genius piece of work." He says, in awe. "How are you going to convince the Duchess to wear them?"

"She won't know it's enchanted." He waves his hands nonchalantly. "I plan to catch the fucker tryna kill her on my own, but that's only when they're on their death bed." Tommy says with an evil grin.

Ranboo only stares at Tommy. "You frighten me, sometimes."

"Looks like i have my work cut out for me if that's only sometimes at this rate." Tommy scoffs. "Off you fucken pop, go do your teleport magic and save our favorite Eastern Duchess."

"She's the only Eastern Duchess right now."

"You're challenging that statement the longer you fucken stay here boob-boy." Tommy scowls, "Go!"

Ranboo sighs, and salutes, before he disappears into thin air exploding into particles of violets and reds-- oh, those are new. Reds.

He wonders where that came from.

Tommy shrugs, and resumes with his tinkering. He has a few moments before Sam Returns, and he plans to use those moments to work on a better sample of earrings if he wants this to work.

.

"You've got something on your mind, Theseus?" Technoblade asks, and this snaps Tommy out of his stupor, away from the translucent tea water that's been grabbing his attention for the entire time he's been sat on this table so far. "You've been awfully quiet today."

Tommy looks up, and looks back down at his cup of tea. "Something's missing is all." He says with a pout, stirring his cup of tea again. "I can't find something in my room, no matter how hard I try."

It's true. He's had to go around the Sapphire Palace in all the old rooms he and Puffy used to frequent to look for that damn portrait book, and he hasn't had much success other than finding some of his old toys.

"Is it a toy?"

"No! It's a book." He says. "It's something that looked really cool, and I have no idea where it might be anymore."

He raises his eyes and spots Technoblade eyeing Tommy's servants: "Oi, don't glare at them like that. They can't be at fault for not finding it."

"You have to be more careful about not losing your things."

"It's a big place," He complains. "And I've had to move rooms a lot since I last seen it." Tommy pouts, crossing his arms. "I don't remember where I last saw it," he adds a frown in his voice, sounding like he's actually distressed by it.

"What is it, then?"

"A book!" Tommy says. "It's this really cool book I read all the time before," an exaggeration, he's only seen this book during some occasions in his life that he could only remember when he was practically an infant. He remembers barely even knowing how to talk in this new and strange fucking body.

He can't help but be glad that he's been an absolute boss with it so far. Tommy's hella proud of where he is sometimes.

Except sometimes he has an extra lisp when he talks.

And that damned dribble that he can't seem to get rid of when he speaks without minding his mouth. It's really irritating.

"You have to be more specific about this book, Theseus." Technoblade sits back, and he crosses his legs. It's something he often does when he's interested in something Tommy has to say, which means that Technoblade is likely going to help him out in this matter.

"It's sorta old! It's got browns at the edges of the papers and something, but it's still got this gold thingy that makes the paper edge of the book shiny!"

"We have a lot of books like that."

"I know, but it's none of those!" He leans his head against his hand, and boredly stirs his cup of tea. He knows that it's rude, but he's found long ago that etiquette in front of his brother wasn't something the both of them were fond of. "It's got this bind at the back, it's a bit worn, but it's something of like, red leather or something."

Technoblade hums, "Do you have a title?"

Tommy shakes his head.

"Any other definin' features, Theseus?"

"It's got pictures."

"A lot of books have pictures."

Tommy shakes his head again, frustrated. "No! This one is special!" He says in a sort of childish frustration. "It's got a portrait of you!" Tommy says. "And this portrait is actually how I got to recognize you the first time I saw you-- I couldn't really believe my eyes, though. You looked a lot different in person." He looks up thoughtfully. "Maybe it was the lighting? I'm sure it was the lighting. You looked really sad and dim in it." He says, babbling like Technoblade usually likes him to be.

Technoblade doesn't respond quickly after that, not like their usual banter. He seems to be thinking, but he doesn't really look like it either. He doesn't look very thoughtful. He...

He looks a lot more guarded than usual. It makes him harder to read, even to Tommy who has had most of his life to master what every single microexpression on his face could even suggest he's thinking.

He wonders why he looks like that.

He doesn't look angry, though, so surely he's in the clear.

"Just me?"

"Nope! Lots of cool looking people too." Oh this is likely leading to something that Tommy would like.

"Haven't heard of it." Technoblade says, and Tommy's gut sinks in disappointment. He was hoping that he'd have an idea, give him something that could allude to Tommy just assuming that Wilbur at least looks like the lost prince. Technoblade looks up at Sam, still unreadable and guarded. "I'm sure someone does, though." He says,

Tommy turns his head to look at Sam, but he only sees his head bowed, as if he's received an order.

This is sending alarm bells around his head. They're hiding something from him, and they're hiding it really well.

"Want to tell me more about this book?"

Tommy faces Technoblade again, suddenly aware that maybe what he's planning is a lot less innocent than he thought. He wonders why they're like this-- when they'd started being like this. "I would if I could." Tommy exaggerates his pout again, making sure that they don't suspect anything of him. Something is clearly wrong if they're trying to fucking hide it from him, and this means he has to pull away with whatever information he does have. "I don't remember it a lot. I'm sure some of my old maids would remember."

Technoblade tsked, and that revealed something to Tommy immediately.

That meant that it wasn't feasible to get information out of them.

He had his suspicions that something must have happened to them, especially with the murmurs of the new servants around him. It hadn't been enough to paint a full picture, but Tommy's got a gist.

They're long gone, and so are Technoblade's hopes of finding the book himself.

He created a dead end for them.

Good.

Something is off with the two of them. Sam, and Technoblade. If Tommy had been a master of Technoblade, Sam seemed to be able to hear him telepathically or some shit. Master of silent glances, he reckons. Tommy will one day learn how to be that good, but until then Tommy's got other cards in his hands.

"You really have no idea where my book could be?" Tommy asks, as if saddened and disappointed. He's a good fucking actor. He could be in the theatre if he wasn't already a prince. Tommy used to like theatres--

His head aches slightly at that, distracting him from that train of thought.

What was... right, the book. He needs to imply that he's seen a book before. and he needs to make sure that Technoblade could make the connection. He's a smart man, not as smart as Tommy, though. He's a fucking genius.

"No," Technoblade says. "We'll keep lookin' for it, though."

Tommy grins, making sure that it reaches his eyes enough that he has to crease them. "Thank you brother!" He says with a smile.

Technoblade tilts his head. "Why'd you want to find it anyway?" He asks, and Tommy's wide grin almost falters at the question. "If it's been ages since you've seen it, then whatever reason you remembered it and wanted it now must have been decently recent."

Ah fuck. He didn't expect Technoblade's curiosity to be this stirred. He has to do some fucking 4d chess to play this fool, damn it. "I was painting." He lies,

And what the fuck was that? He hasn't been painting, and Sam should know that--

"Crayon-drawings of carrots and stick-figures don't count as painting, Theseus." Technoblade retorts, almost playfully. There's a playful crinkle in his eyes.

Tommy almost lunges at him for a hug, just for that out. Yes! He has been 'painting'. He's been 'painting' really fucking good! Thank fucking GODS he'd suggested that. His hindbrain or whatever part of his head that suggested that to him is a fucking genius and by extension so is he!

Tommy huffs, "Yes it does!" Tommy exclaims. "I'm great at it! Wonderful, even!" Tommy crosses his arms, letting himself sound indignant.

"Is that so?" Technoblade questions.

"Yes!"

"This is the only reason you want that book back?" Technoblade asks.

Tommy blinks, and he looks down. He can do something really fucking adorable with this. Tommyinnit has the opportunity to do something so fucking cute. He's going to have Technoblade doting on him for the rest of the decade if not more.

"Spit it out, Theseus."

He pouts.

"What is it."

Tommy whispers under his breath.

"If you're answering me, I'm pretty sure that I'm supposed to hear you--"

"I want to draw myself beside you!" He frowns, but in the back of his head he has just unlocked some sort of route in a game. He looks up at Technoblade, and sees his expression genuinely shocked and in awe,

Fuck yeah, defenses dropped.

He's that fucking cute. That fucking Adorable. He fucking knew it.

Tommy scowls, though, because whatever he suggested wasn't that out of character! "Wipe that look off of your face." He says, and he's stock-still, still unmoving. What the fuck is with that?

"That's why you want that book back?" And finally, he's back and functioning. Nice to know he could cause a malfunction in that guy's system. "To draw on it?"

"To draw me on it!" He corrects. "And a smile on your ugly face!" Tommy says,

And if anyone else, Wilbur included, had witnessed this exchange, they'd likely faint because of his sheer audacity to call the man who rules this empire with an bloody iron fist 'ugly', Between them, and Sam who has become used to these ridiculous exchanges, it's become something of a norm now.

Lighthearted insults that don't hurt anyone are one of the few things that Technoblade seems to enjoy. Sibling banter, and everything.

Technoblade leans forward, and he places his head on his hands with his elbow leaning against the table. "Alright, Theseus." He says, and he could hear the tease in his voice (that's almost always fucking monotonous, he could fix him though). "Just keep drawing your stick figures and maybe you can draw us side-by-side." There's that slight crinkle in his eyes. He's making fun of him!

Tommy scrunches his nose. "You're teasing me." He accuses.

"Me? How could I dare."

"Yeah! How dare you!" He crosses his arms. "You have to make it up for me. My poor feelings. My feelings are hurt." He says dramatically.

Technoblade snorts-- a honest to god snort! The audacity of this bitch! "I'll make it up to you, don't worry about it." He huffs, amused. "Now, drink your tea before it gets any colder than it already is." He says, and he sits straight again so he could drink their tea.

Tommy huffs, but he doesn't retort anything new about this new conversation. He looks up, and he sees Technoblade engrossed in his cup of tea.

He has to look up on whatever caused him to be so suspicious earlier.

And he has to ask Puffy about it the first opportunity he's got.

Technoblade has been... distracted as of late. Not with politics, no. He's been distracted over him, Tommy, and has been calling him into meetings more frequently than before. Tommy isn't complaining, no, not by a lot. However he's losing a lot of words to say to him because he's practically being wrung dry of stories to talk about.

And when he'd talk about something he already did before, like a filler, hoping that Technoblade had either forgotten about it or blocked his ears off, he would hear:

"Haven't you already told me about this?"

And Tommy would respond with:

"Yeah but I like this story so bear with me here!"

But it's... honestly endearing how Technoblade had actually been listening to him, not just blocking him out or treating him as a sort of white noise. Tommy had felt his heart swell at it, loving that he still has Technoblade's undivided attention despite the fact that surely his bit has to have become tiring after a while and every week (nearing every day).

Tommy can't help but admit he actually enjoys Technoblade's dry company-- because yes, he is dry, but the sort of dry that Tommy understands now that he's saturated himself to his presence. He gets when Technoblade is joking, and a lot of the times he is. His own sense of humor is actually pretty funny.

But that's considering that his sheer overwhelming presence was a lot more concerning than he is funny. Anyone who would see him wouldn't recognize a joke from a death threat.

"Why have you been hanging out with me a lot more?" Tommy ends up asking on their sixth consecutive tea time together. "Don't you have business to do?" He tilts his head curiously at him.

Technoblade looks up from the tea he'd just poured for himself, and raises an eyebrow. "You sound like my presence is unwanted."

"I don't sound like that at all!" Tommy huffs. "It's just that... I know that you've been really busy with those important looking people. Tea time hasn't been this frequent since you came back from that very long trip you took outside the castle."

Tommy admits that. He knows that Technoblade has lost a lot of free time since then, that he has been going through meetings with outsiders within the castle. While it's true that it's a bit sad, this bonding time is really honestly getting on his nerves.

It almost feels like... "Are you getting clingy?" Tommy asks with a smug look on his face. "Admit it! You miss me!" He points accusingly at the opposite.

"It's as if we haven't been together the whole day regardless of whether or not I have meetin's." He deadpans, which is true. Technically when Tommy is free from lectures and Technoblade isn't occupied with meeting people, he ends up being within his vicinity regardless, be it the dining table, the study rooms, the throne hall.

Sometimes even during the meetings themselves.

That had been one time, unfortunately, and that meant that everyone surrounding Technoblade during those meetings have raised precautions in blocking Tommy from those occasions, Sam included.

Must be under Technoblade's command after disrupting the things.

Jokes on him, he'll only try harder.

Tommy hums. "I dunno, tea times are special." Tommy says to him. He looks at the lake beside him, "This place is special. I wanna keep going here forever."

He almost sounds wistful in saying that. As if he'd lose it.

"Then you'll keep this forever." Technoblade responds. "It's as simple as that, Theseus."

Tommy frowns, though. "You're sure? Forever? Forever can't be that simple."

"It is." Technoblade says. "I'll make it so, for you."

Tommy feels his heart swell at that. He grins at the implication. Technoblade is willing to do the impossible, just for him.

It feels right. This feels right.

"I'll wait then." He says, "Anyway, so yesterday I heard the maids gossiping about the new chef!"

"Of course you'd be the type to listen into maids gossiping about their potential love interest."

"How'd you know it's about a new love interest! I haven't told you about it!"

.

"You must be the young Prince Theseus," an unfamiliar person greets, standing straight with a kind-looking smile on their face. They have no pupils nor irises, and their eyes are all white. They're wearing a regal set of clothes, looking just as royal as he does. Tommy wonders who this one is, he doesn't think he recognizes anyone with that appearance. "It's a pleasure to--"

Sam points a trident at least a foot away from their face. The Warden glares at them, intention to kill clearer than the shock on Tommy's face-- and that in itself is clearer than anything in the world. "You are to greet the young prince appropriately." Sam says, voice low and intimidating and nearly rumbling like thunder. "And even then you are to keep a respectful distance away from him."

The stranger remains unfazed, and only takes one step backwards. They keep their calm composure. "My apologies, then." They say with a humble tone. They bow. "Glory forever to the Blood of the Antarctic Empire." They say, and they raise two fingers to their chest.

Tommy bows back. "Glory forever." He says in shorthand, because he's curious about this new arrival. "May I know your name?"

"I am Eret," The stranger says. "I'm a mere Count of the South."

"I haven't seen you here before, Count Eret." Tommy says, "Can I ask what brings you here?"

They nod, "I've just finished meeting with your brother, is all." Eret says smoothly, and despite the presence of Sam, they sound unphased and unaffected by the clear threat of death should they misstep-- which she won't. She seems to know where the line is, sees it clearly.

Tommy blinks. "Can I ask what about?"

"Of course," Eret answers. "We've merely noticed an instability in Magic in the South. I've only visited to discuss that." they say, "I'm sure your lecturer, Wilbur, had discussed to you the intensity and strength of mana at the poles?"

He nods. Yes, he did. And Tommy liked that lecture. "You know Wilbur?" Tommy asks.

"We learned together." Eret says, almost proud. "He had been a genius, but we'd parted when we'd charted different courses."

The way they look at Tommy had started to get unsettling. "Courses in life split, and bring people together." She says, and their eyes linger on Tommy's a little longer than he thought was comfortable. He was about ready to say something about it before Sam spoke up.

"Are you quite done?" He'd asked irritatingly. "Unfortunately, as you've mentioned Wilbur Soot, the Young Prince had just been on his way for one of his lectures."

Tommy is grateful for Sam sometimes, but not so much on his animosity with literally everyone Tommy's just met.

"Of course, I did not mean to keep you." Eret says with a bow, greeting Theseus goodbye appropriately. "Before we part, may I bestow upon you a gift?" Eret asks, voice even and smooth as she suggests it.

Tommy nods. "Of course! I don't mind!" He says with a smile.

Eret grabs something from her pocket, and gives Tommy a crinkled yellow flower. It's unrecognizable from how crinkled it's become. "I apologize if it is unsightly," he says, looking sad at the state of it. "But I'd found it in the garden on the way here, and thought it beautiful. I ought to return it to its owner before I depart."

Tommy takes it from Eret's fingers, gently, and he places it into his palm. An odd gift, but it should be normal to gift children flowers. "Thank you, Count Eret!" Tommy smiles.

The stranger smiles back. "Truly, to the Glory of the Empire." Eret's eyes linger on Tommy despite having no pupils.

That creeped him out, so he let Sam guide him quicker to his room. Eret's eyes are no longer on him, fortunately.

"Sam," Tommy ends up asking while they walk to their room.

"Your Highness?"

"Who was that?"

"Eret, my Prince--"

"No, I know that." Tommy waves off. "Countess and everything-- I mean, what's their role?" He says. "Is he important in the South?"

Sam hums, "She quite is." He says. "Eret, the Countess, has a high bout of ranking in the tower of Magic. They're the one who's in charge of communication between the tower and the palace."

Oh, that point person, then. Makes sense that they'd be here.

Tommy hums. "Alright, that makes sense." He says.

"Why'd you ask?"

"Making a scrapbook!" He lies, knowing that it's nonsense enough for it to make sense for a child his age. "You're already on it!"

Sam sounds amused. He always does, when Tommy's involved. "Want to show it to me?"

"Not til it's done!"

"And when will it be finished, do you reckon?"

"When I say so, and I say it's not done!"

.

Tommy blinks at the board, seeing it as something particularly odd- - well, not the board. The things written on the board were things that he hasn't heard of before in his life. "I've... never heard of those rules before." He says, honest to the gods stumped on this particular topic.

"I'm not surprised." Wilbur huffs, voice low. "The lectures I get to teach you are, well, heavily regulated, but you asked something that prompted this so technically I didn't bring this up." Wilbur says, and looks at the board. "I should actually, uhm, get rid of this before I get seen with implicating information.

It... it makes a frightening amount of sense now.

Technoblade's questions about the book, the unreadable expression he got on his face since he mentioned his portrait.

"Censorship." He mutters under his breath.

Wilbur blinks. "If you put it like that, it sounds malicious-- but I assure you it's not. It's not censorship."

Tommy scowls. "It's censorship if you say it any way you want to say it." He says. "It's control on the media-- it's definitely censorship!"

"It's less so censorship and more so.... lack of permission?" Wilbur suggests, and winces at the sound of it. "The point is, as the Royal Family and direct descendants of the people, uhm, not being mentioned, the right to refuse dissemination of information regarding them is appropriate for the prince to rescind."

"I'm a prince too!"

"I mean, for the ruling prince." Wilbur explains. "This is within the rights of the Royal Court to control the processing and spread of this information."

It doesn't sit right. It sits wrong. It sits awfully wrong and crooked where it's sat. It's just... this is sounding less and less simple than he'd thought. This entire thing concerning his plans and everything.

He hadn't even had the intention to, but somehow he's implicated that there's a criminal within the palace. And he'd done that without even knowing.

Censorship.

There is fucking censorship in this damn country, and this just...

This implicates someone he holds dearly in his heart, and implicates her to the point of the highest form of punishment.

"Do you..." He looks up at Wilbur, face growing paler and paler by the second. "I need you to keep this between us, please, the things that I'm going to ask you about." Tommy requests of Wilbur.

Wilbur, however, looked a lot more concerned than he should be. He should clear this up. He's not the criminal, by technicality. Someone else is, and he plans to keep their name clean. "Of course," Wilbur ends up answering. "Always, Tommy--"

"Is there a book out there, in circulation outside the castle, that has the portraits of the royal family and those who were before them?" Tommy asks,

Wilbur pales at the mention of it. "Yes." he says in a hushed tone. "There... there is, but I've only heard about it in rumors." He answers. "Tommy, how--"

"Is it within these censorship rules?"

"It's not censorship-!"

"Just answer!" Tommy says in a hushed shout.

Wilbur inhales, and he nods. "Yes." He ends up saying. "Holding or distributing books of this kind, holding any and all images of the royal family, is deemed a crime punishable by the guillotine."

Tommy feels his gut sink. He feels buzzing in his head as he tries to formulate something, anything about it. This is wrong, this is something wrong, and something that he has to deal with.

Because he had been an infant, he had been so young, when Puffy had shown him the book. The portrait.

Tommy was less than two years old when he'd been shown the portrait of Technoblade, their parents,

And the dead, second prince.

It feels dizzying, the sudden revelation. "In these rumors," Tommy has to know. Has to know where she stands. "Who are circulating these books? Who are--" Tommy swallows his throat at the memories of the book.

"Spreading the information itself isn't what's punishable by death-- you told me this." Tommy says. "Why are they getting killed?" He asks shakily.

Wilbur frowns, "Tommy, we should stop--"

"No!" Tommy says. "I need to know, please." Tommy says desperately. This is... extreme. Exaggerated. "Wilbur, I trust you on this. Please, I need to know."

"These books that are rumored-- they don't exist, Tommy, are punishable by death solely due to the fact that these people who own them or put them in circulation are said to be affiliated with the rebellion."

Tommy feels his heart freeze.

The rebellion.

It's real, and its presence in the palace is real, and--

It isn't safe. He's been playing in a field full of shards and he's been lucky, but he knows now the small line he's dancing on and he has been unaware. The rebellion, the one that eventually Wilbur will lead, that will kill his brother, Technoblade, one day, is real, and it's present in the palace.

"Tommy, if you're scared of them, they're practically just hearsay right now." Wilbur says, trying to comfort the boy who seemed shaken. "Class is over, early today."

"But Wil--"

"You need to take a break, Tommy." Wilbur looks really concerned. "I'm sorry if the way I answered your questions seemed really... scary. I forget sometimes that some things could be scary to you."

Normally Tommy should say that it doesn't scare him. Not at all, not even a little bit. But the fact remains that he is scared. He's scared that despite the things he's interfered with, the plot is still enroute towards something.

He looks up at Wilbur, and he decides that he has to make this quick. He has to be in close quarters with Technoblade somehow so that they could be united as brothers.

And there won't be any death flags for either of them, not when Tommy should have struck them down.

Wilbur Soot, the Prince of Song and the leader of the Rebellion, is a standing flag of death.

Tommy needs to get him in the clear, before any harm is done to the family he has now. The stakes are higher, with the factors now within sight, and Tommy has already somehow derailed a good bit of the plot that concerned his brother Technoblade.

He has to bring back the second prince. He has to.

"If you're not going to tea time," Tommy says, "Would you and Henry at least accompany me while I present a music piece to my brother? It's a new one, and you were my music teacher for a considerable amount of time. It makes sense!"

Wilbur is actually considering it. That's wonderful news, for one. "Okay, alright sure. I don't think I'd be intruding if you put it that way." Wilbur says, "But that's only if Henry is coming with us. I have no idea why you're so insistent that I meet the Imperial Prince."

Tommy snorts. "I'm just saying, if you end up meeting him you might get a promotion."

"That's not quite how it works, Tommy,"

"Literally nothing is going to go wrong, Wil!" Tommy says. "But you said your yes anyway, so you owe this to me now!" He says, before sprinting off to another room to prepare his plans.

The session for today had just ended, and Sam is waiting right outside the door. "Sam," he whispers to the man, and he sounds a hum from his voice, as if acknowledging Tommy's request. "Are the preparations almost ready?" Tommy asks, to which Sam responds with a nod.

"Almost, Tommy." He says fondly, "I'm honored to have been a part of this. It must have taken a while to plan." The scaled-man says,

To which Tommy internally denies. Technically, this plan came to him in a dream. A dream from a while ago, actually. He doesn't quite remember it, but he at least remembers that music was important to Technoblade in that dream.

Tommy is a good musician. He's skilled with the piano, and then this plan had come into play with his goal of uniting his brothers.

The plan is simple to Tommy.

He has one single motive for this week- this is to have Technoblade meet Wilbur Soot and have the man decide the same thing he did when he chose to keep Wilbur around in Prince of Song. It's simple! He doesn't even have to change anything about it, this is just going to be a meeting that was meant to happen a few years before it actually does.

It'd be striking down a lot of prominent death flags, and it'd create a stronger defense against the internal affairs that sought to bring Technoblade down. Having them be united as one reduces the risk of someone pulling Wilbur into the fray and going revolution crazy on Technoblade for whatever manipulative reason the rebellion decides this time (considering that Tommy won't be losing his head, not by a longshot).

It's going to be a concert. A small one, just for Technoblade-- at least, that's in the books. The point of this is to give the two brothers an opportunity to meet and then recognize each other! That's all that's important to him at this point. The reunion is going to be sweet, it's going to be amazing, and it's going to wipe the floor with tears and fix all of their problems! Nothing is going to go wrong with this! Absolutely nothing.

"Is it ready for today?"

"Not today," Sam says, and he almost sounds sorry. "Some nobles had decided to request an audience with your brother regarding the East. They've been bothering him incessantly for fundings on research--"

Tommy is just about to retort and suggest yet another intervention, before Sam cuts him off before he could even speak. "And no, I won't be your accomplice in interrupting yet another important meeting. While I find it absolutely adorable that you'd go through hell and back to give your brother these things you call 'Origami', I've been instructed by him to not accompany you in any other forms of mischief." Sam's eyes sparkle, "However, this doesn't mean I'm supposed to stop you. I'm just not supposed to help you in the future, when you come up with other plans that don't include me."

Tommy pouts. "I'm sick of planning," he says. "It's tiring."

"Then I guess that's less interventions for you, then." Sam says, chuckling.

"Well if not today, when?"

"Tonight."

Tommy gasps, and he tugs Sam by the arm. "Tonight!?" he asks, excited.

Sam nods, and he looks to be just as happy at the revelation. "I'm looking forward to your concern, Tommy."

Tommy grins. "Oh you better! I'm going to be really really amazing later!" He says.

As grandiose as Tommy had wanted this small event to be, he also didn't quite have the patience to make something bigger and bolder. He just wanted the two of them to meet already so he could move on to the rest of his plans and have them either avoid the war or outright fucking smash the enemy country that fuckin dared to even wage war against them.

He needed Wilbur to be Technoblade's aide immediately, ASAP, and his CV and resume of being Tommy's tutor was already something that had been impressive in itself considering Tommy's sheer intellect. This should and could be a walk in the park.

But there were flowers, is all. Flower decor all over the room he'd decided was going to be an easy place to drag Technoblade onto before he starts his special concert.

Tommy has it all planned, from head to toe! He's prepared to make this worthwhile, a reunion perfect for a concert. Tommy grins, looking at the place. He looks at Sam, who is at the door. "Sam! Try it with the lights dimmed!" Tommy says,

There is a gust of wind surrounding them, and it blows half the candles out while leaving some in the middle. Tommy looks at the place, in awe.

It's dim enough to set something theatrical, but light enough to see everything in the room.

Everything, including your long lost brother who you've been missing for decades now.

This is going to be a grand 'surprise', a perfect accident. Tommy is excited, so excited, that one of the things that's been troubling him during his entire stay in this palace is finally going to be resolved. He really should have done this the first time, but he hadn't been as close to Wilbur as he had been during the previous times before.

Tommy whips his head, facing Sam proudly. "What do you think?" He asks, and his elation has to be clear on his face when Sam is so blatantly adoring the little kid right before him.

"I think your brother is going to love this." He says. "I have to ask, though, what's the occasion?"

The prince shrugs. "Nothing!" he says. "I just want to surprise Techno-- he seems a lot more stressed as of late, and I felt like helping out with that this way if I can't just barge into his meeting rooms and solve his problems for him!" Tommy says with a sly grin.

Sam tsked. "What a shame, then." He sighs. "Perhaps you could even, I don't know, walk over there yourself, make it end a little bit earlier with the rest of the nobles knowing you're of a higher priority than the rest of them." Sam sighs again, how dramatic of him, just tell it to him straight what he's thinking.

"That's a good idea." Tommy says, "Actually, if you could check the flowers for me while I, uh, go to the bathroom for a little bit, that'd be great." The prince grins. "Totally not to do what you just suggested me to do, nope!"

"Ah, yes, of course your highness." There's a laugh in his voice. "I wish you luck, my prince." Sam says with a grin, and observes the flowers a little too intensely than he should. "I'll be looking on over here, then. Good luck."

Tommy giggles, and he shouts a thank you to Sam before running off to where he knows Technoblade is having his meeting in.

Tommy runs, wanting to waste no time.

He comes across Wilbur, who is walking towards the agreed upon venue-- "Whoa! Prince Tommy, what's got you running?" he asks with a playful tone in his voice.

"I'm fetching my brother!" He shouts in a whisper, "Get to your positions!"

"Aye aye, your majesty." Wilbur salutes with two fingers, and walks on over.

The maids and servants laugh upon seeing Tommy run free-- he doesn't usually run, and when they spot him running they're usually going to see Sam run after him. It's never a dull day when they see their young prince run across the halls.

Tommy grins. Today is going to be a good day, and so will the rest of the week.

When he reaches the door, Tommy first has to take a good breath. He fixes himself, and he grabs the door handles.

"Brother-!" He exclaims, but the excitement drops in his voice when he sees it empty. Tommy frowns. He's supposed to be in here.

Tommy then continues to run elsewhere. He comes across a servant-- "Hi! Have you seen brother?" Tommy asks.

After the greeting, the servant stands straight before him. "I've seen him, but he looks like he was in a bit of a rush. He seemed to be headed to your room."

Tommy frowns. "Okay," he says, wondering what Technoblade is doing in his room. He takes off again, and as he runs he doesn't forget to shout his thanks to the kind servant.

The prince approaches his room, and he sees that the door to the room is left open. Tommy skids to a stop in front of his room: "Brother-!" And there's no one inside it.

This time, Clara is the one to approach him. "My Prince, " She greets, and she tilts her head. "Are you looking for your brother?" She ends up asking.

Tommy nods, too tired to speak out because of how out of breath he is.

"He was just looking for you," She says, "I told him that you had been under Sir Sam's care, while I was in the kitchen for today. He seemed a bit, err, frustrated about it."

Tommy blinks.

"He went that way," She points towards the left, and he nods.

"Thanks Clara!" he shouts back as he runs, and honestly he's getting really fucking tired of his short legs and small feet. He just wants this to be over with! When he's got Technoblade he's going to demand him to carry him to the venue where the surprise is.

Tommy runs, his shoes thumping against the floor loudly.

Eventually he sees a cluster of servants right in front of his room, helping him with his things.

Tommy slows to a stop, why are they packing?

He looks at some of them, the few he can recognize spot him from a distance and their eyes turn wide. They bow immediately, while still holding Technoblade's items. One of them is holding... a sword?

From the room exits Technoblade, and he is dressed in clothing that he doesn't usually wear, but it's hastily done, as if he had been in the middle of changing and had dressed quick to see him.

But with the way he's dressed, he could see it. He's preparing to go outside. Why is he preparing to go outside?

Technoblade has a downward tilt to his lips, as if he had been upset by some recent news. "Theseus," he calls, arms ready to reach out to him as he approaches Tommy with a pace that was quick.

"Brother!" He says, finally, but he was still confused. Tommy allows himself to be lifted by Technoblade, and takes a good look at him from where he's being carried. "Why are you dressing up?" He asks, tilting his head curiously. He looks behind Technoblade, and he can see the luggages. It isn't much, it's lighter in comparison to before, but the sight of it made him anxious. "Are you... going somewhere?" Tommy asks, disappointed.

Technoblade's deepened frown only confirms it. He is going somewhere, and he is leaving. "I am, Theseus. I'll be leaving tonight." He says, and it seemed heavy even on him. It's like he doesn't even want to leave. "I'm sorry, brother." He brushes Tommy's curls away from his brow. "I don't want to leave you here on your own, but I'm needed."

Tommy frowns. "What for?"

"There's a dispute in the East." Technoblade says. "Something I... have to deal with myself." He answers. "I won't be long, Theseus, don't worry."

His heart sinks.

So Technoblade is leaving. Again.

But he's supposed to have helped out with the East! He's supposed to be dealing with this problem together, whether or not Technoblade knows. "Can't you bring me with you?" He asks, and he knows it's impossible, but he wants to plead for it regardless.

"I'll be back by the end of the week," Technoblade says. "I won't be long."

"But you're leaving." Tommy says with a frown, and a genuinely sad voice.

"I know, Theseus, I know." Technoblade says. "But I'll be back with gifts, and you'll be safe here in the castle while I'm out there, okay?"

Tommy nods. "Come back quick, will you?"

Technoblade is almost smiling, as if he's trying to comfort Tommy with it. "I will, Tommy. I'll be back soon." He says.

Tommy looks out the window of the hall, and he turns back to Technoblade. "Will you at least let me help send you off tonight?" He asks,

Technoblade looks at the rest of the servants, and Tommy follows his sight and sees that everything is already prepared.

"Of course, Theseus." Technoblade says. "I don't see a problem in that."

So that's how Theseus spends the rest of his night instead. He'd be at Technoblade's side while they spend less than an hour gathering the rest of the belongings he'd need-- packing light, because the time he'd be away will be shorter than before.

Tommy eyes the sword. "What do you need a sword for?" Tommy asks, looking at the handle glimmering in the light of the candles.

"Protection." Technoblade says.

The younger prince nods, but he doesn't feel comforted by that answer. Something about the sword had felt off, and wrong. He tears his gaze away from it.

When Sam appears again, Tommy is already in Technoblade's arms at the entrance of the palace.

This feels like déjà vu, and it would have been if he hadn't known when this familiar scene took place before.

Tommy doesn't like it when Technoblade leaves. There is this feeling of unease within the palace.

And it leaves a large chunk in his schedule for him to be left empty and bored. He doesn't like it, but this is the life of a royal it seems.

Eventually, the young prince is handed off for Sam to carry.

"Is there anything you want, Theseus?" Technoblade asks.

Tommy thinks. Really thinks. "I want you home soon." Tommy says.

Technoblade's eyes crinkle. "I'll try to adhere to that wish for you, my brother." There's a hand on Tommy's head, and he like the feeling of it. "I'll see you soon." He says,

Sam, as if unable to bear the knowledge of it, decides to snitch. "Your highness, he actually--" Tommy kicks Sam in the stomach.

"I'll have a surprise when you get back." Tommy says, "It'll be so poggery that you wouldn't even expect it!" The prince says proudly, covering for the fact that Sam had been about to spoil the wasted surprise he'd had for the evening.

Technoblade huffs, amused. "Of course, I'll be looking forward to it when I get back."

"Soon." Tommy adds.

"Soon." Technoblade confirms.

Eventually, Technoblade rests his forehead on his brother's. "Be good while I'm gone." He says.

"I can't promise that." Tommy says that playfully.

He snorts. "Of course you can't, Theseus." Technoblade says with an amused huff. He steps away, and glances at Sam.

Sam nods, and there's this silent agreement between the two of them before Technoblade turns and rides on his horse. Not even a carriage this time. A whole horse.

He must be in a hurry, if that's the case.

Just like before, Tommy doesn't leave from where they're stood until he sees Technoblade disappear.

"Tommy," Sam breaks the silence. "I'm sorry that the surprise didn't--"

"It's okay!" Tommy cuts off before he could continue. He doesn't want to think about it. And it's not like his talents would spoil and perish while the event is delayed. "My brother is a busy man, it's hard to rule the empire on your own." He says. "One day I'll be able to help him." He says.

He thinks of Wilbur. It's okay that it's been a bit delayed. In hindsight maybe he's been far too impatient.

Technoblade, however, Tommy wants to help the most. One day he won't have to believe that he's carrying the Empire on his own.

Until then, Tommy is all Technoblade's got.

"Now we have more time to prepare." Tommy says with a grin. "I want it in the throne room when he gets back!"

Sam smiles, but he still looks like he pities the young boy. "Of course." Sam says. "Not to mention we'd have the whole Emerald Palace's servants at our disposal, not having to keep it secret and all from your brother."

Tommy nods. "Alright, we'd better get to planning then." He says. "We have things to do, forts to be manning, places to be!"

"Of course, your highness."

Chapter End Notes

anyway, hm, i wonder why technoblade is out there. hmmmmmm.

edit: it's been a hot minute since i posted and damn you guys are already out there cheering at technoblade's bloodlust. I might just make you guys canon, dang /lh

Castle under Siege

Chapter Notes

Did you really think I'd be keeping this fluffy? That this'll all be crack?

Remember the tags. It was never just crack.

This is crack treated seriously.

:)

(content warning for this chapter: violence, blood, descriptions of corpses)

Not beta-read

Writing this (and the next chapter) for a submission for an event in The Writer's Block

Prompt: Dimensional travel / trapped in another dimension

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

THE END OF A TYRANT'S REIGN BEGINS NOW. From the shadows of the palace that the revolutionist had grown up in, had learned to call home, once upon a time.

William, brother of one, and the rightful heir to the throne, had every right to be in this room. Had every right to stride across the carpet that extends from the entrance of this room all the way to the throne at the opposite end of it.

And between him and the throne, sits a man whose head is what the masses calls for.

"Welcome home, William." The Prince of Blood said in a dull, monotonous tone. He'd always spoken in such a droll manner, as if there wasn't a thing in his lifetime had had prompted him to act like a human being.

William thought bitterly: he could at least die like one.

"You are to be punished for your crimes, Imperial Crown Prince." William announced. "How do you plead."

The Prince of Blood does not move to escape. He is not at the very least unsettled by the mere suggestion of death-- while William hadn't been the one to say it, he had already known that this was where it needed to end. With William's reign, and the Blood Prince's death.

"I have not heard of any crimes, William." he says. "As far as I'm aware, it has always been within my jurisdiction to do what I have done."

"Yet you have served injustice over injustice." William retorts angrily, and he unsheathes his sword.

William, on that fateful day, had been prepared to die. He had seen the sword on The Blood Prince's hip, had seen the way he'd wielded that weapon against many victims.

On his own brother.

He had been prepared to be the second brother that this man slaughtered.

To his surprise, despite being right at the man's toes, he hasn't moved to attack nor to defend.

"Do you plead innocent, or guilty?" He questioned yet again, sword unsheathed and prepared.

The man had only smiled, and tilted his head. His red eyes glimmered in the faint light of moonlight, glowing scarlet despite the fact that no one had been present in the room to light the candles.

"I'm glad to see you again, William." The man had only answered. For the first time since William had been reunited with his brother, this has been the only moment when he'd spoken with sincerity and with the slightest bout of humanity.

William felt his heart clench at those words.

Because those were not the words he was looking for.

"Guilty." William declared, and he raised his sword.

The last thing he saw The Prince of Blood do, had been to shut his eyes.

As if it was a bliss.

The end began then, when the crown rolled off of the Blood Prince's temple.

.

Tommy can finally say it, but since Technoblade had taken his sweet time on a previous venture around the Empire, he'd gotten used to the idea of being without Technoblade. It hasn't been an issue, no, not since he's left.

It also made the Palace a lot quieter now that the person that multiple people had wished to meet is no longer present within the place. There were less people walking around the place, more guards, fortunately.

Ultimately, there's been measures that were secured in for the time period in which Technoblade had gone.

When Tommy had returned to the venue on the day his brother left, the people he'd invited were none the wiser. They seemed to be expecting Technoblade, still.

"He's got business in the East." Tommy announced, which led to multiple people feeling sorry for him. Well, they shouldn't be sorry for him. It's okay, because this wasn't the main event. If anything he just felt sorry for Wilbur. He can't be of the same status as Tommy for the time being.

"Do you want to play the piano, still?" Wilbur suggested, and Tommy had thought about it. Really thought about it.

"I'm sorry." He said with a smile. "I hope you understand but I don't really feel like it." No, he wasn't disheartened. Not at all. Not even by a little bit.

It's just that he didn't feel like playing on the piano, is all. There's nothing more than that. He just didn't want to play, that day.

Today, he spends his time gardening.

Normally he'd ask Ranboo for a bout of mischief, but something had come up in the Mage's Tower in the South, something about an abnormality in the pole, or some sort of disruption to where the mana are being drawn towards. Tommy doesn't quite understand, nor does he particularly care. He's sure Ranboo, who had been in haste when he'd left, would explain it better to him when they get back here instead.

Though it's taking longer than usual. Tommy doesn't really know why.

Which leaves him with nothing but sheer boredom to fuel his daily needs.

That, and the ever bothersome Wilbur who seemed to sense that he'd been down since Technoblade left.

"Wilbur, normally when faced with Royalty, you shouldn't so easily assume that a large blank in one's schedule automatically means permission to bother me while I'm out here minding my own business." Tommy says, carrying his own pot of flowers in his quaint little corner in the garden.

The brunet huffed at the words Tommy had just said. "You say that like you're not the living embodiment of a looming stormcloud, Tommy." Wilbur retorts instead. "I'm just here to keep you company during these trying times." He says, seeming rather innocent.

Tommy gawks. "'Trying times', what are you trying to imply here? These aren't trying times, asshole."

"I really cannot believe you curse this much, being royalty and all."

"Being 'royalty and all' apparently doesn't make me immune for the sheer bullshit getting spouted off at me."

Wilbur snorts, "Alright, Tommy." He laughs. "How about we just prepare for the surprise we've got for your brother, hm?"

"It'd be pointless." Tommy retorts. "The flowers will die almost immediately. It's better if we wait until he's close to home before we prepare the surprise."

"The groundwork?"

"The servants already put it down."

"How about the piano?"

"Moved."

"Is there really nothing else you want to be doing right now?" Wilbur says, and Tommy could tell that the man was getting distraught--

Tommy dusts his hands. "Well, we could always just resort to my other hobby." He says. Tommy looks to the side, and he sees the servants who are watching over them astutely. He wonders what they think about Wilbur. Does anyone really see the resemblance between this man and his supposed brother? Because Tommy sees it. Those two are brothers, twins, if he remembers correctly.

Wilbur follows suit, helping Tommy doff the gardening garments he's wearing so he could get inside cleanly. "What other hobby?"

Tommy grins, "You're gonna have to keep it secret between us!" Tommy says,

The brunet seems worried when he says that. "The last time you suggested a secret, it was on the topic of someone being beheaded." Wilbur seemed less so worried and more so nervous. As if being scared that he'd be an accomplice.

Tommy shrugs, "Don't worry, this one is a lighter charge of felony." He says nonchalantly,

"Pardon-!?"

"I was kidding!" Tommy retorts. "Unless they banned magic or something in this country." he says,

"Not that I'm aware of, no." Wilbur says.

"If that's the case, then I'm sure there'd be no issue between us and my hobby then." Tommy says, and there's a hop in his step as he walks on over to Ranboo's quarters-- otherwise known as Tommy's space for arts and crafts with enchantment. He'd been having a fun time tinkering around with enchantments and jewelry, being able to bend metal and carve gems to his taste had been really helpful with the use of sharpness on a set of tools that don't necessarily require stabbing or impaling someone.

Really, the worst that his tools can do is probably cut a finger, but that hasn't happened yet, and if ever that were to happen Ranboo would be able to fix it.

Err, theoretically, that is.

He hasn't actually cut off a thumb before, and he doesn't want to try it.

On the way there, though, Tommy and Wilbur come across a frazzled Henry. "William," he says, relieved that he came across him. "By any chance did you go through our shared office earlier?" Tommy hears Henry ask.

As if seeing him late, Henry's eyes shift down to the fidgeting blond beside him, and he greets him properly. "I apologize for my disheveled appearance." Henry brushes his hair back. "It's just that the papers are a mess and I had to ask if Sir Soot saw anything about it earlier. Henry says, and he seems apologetic.

Tommy blinks, and he shoves Wilbur slightly. "I don't mind, go do your teacher things Wil." Tommy says with a grin. "You can knock on Ranboo's door when you're done. I'll be there today." He says,

Wilbur frowns. "Are you sure, Prince Tommy?" He asks, "I'm sure it isn't urgent-" Wilbur turns towards Henry who looked like really tired. "What, uhm, exactly got messed with?" Wilbur asks Henry.

"The accounting documents in regards to Prince Theseus' education." Henry says, and Wilbur pales as well.

His eyes shifts towards Tommy, and honestly Tommy really didn't need much convincing to get himself to get rid of Wilbur.

Tommy shoos Wilbur, pushing him towards Henry.

"Why are you so worried?" Tommy laughs, "This place is practically my turf! Nothing can possibly happen in this place. In hindsight, maybe he shouldn't have been this cocky. Or maybe he should have become more cautious, just as he had initially been when he'd reincarnated in this world.

As the reader, chances are that you already know where this is going.

But for Tommy, he couldn't, at the time, ever comprehend this place being anything but safe for him and his family. This is his fortress, a place of safety that his brother built for him. Nothing that had ill-intention could reach him here.

So he couldn't have expected anything other than good from this place that he's learned to call his home.

Tommy had watched Wilbur walk away with Henry before continuing off to tinker with jewelry.

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He's looking at what he's got. Thorns in itself isn't a good method of defense when people don't realize that the wearer has thorns in the first place. That's the best thing about that enchantment, though. When you're being struck by an enemy, the enchantment won't every let that enemy expect that the blow is coming from you.

Maybe he could make a fortune out of this. Technically, Ranboo aside, learning the syntax of these enchantments is nearly impossible if it weren't for Tommy's previous understanding of enchantments.

Tommy takes in the sight of the diamond. It's sparkling, but that's about the only purpose of using a diamond as his main material. It makes the enchantment inconspicuous, makes it unidentifiable by the naked eye. Someone who knew their diamonds well would likely be able to discern that this wasn't an ordinary diamond by any means, but nobles aren't experts no matter how they try to look like it. They don't know their shit.

Which is why it's a good one.

However, the best one for enchantments would be opal, or perhaps tourmaline. Anything to adhere to the specific glimmer of the enchantment sticking to the material. Hell, maybe even moissanite or Swarovski crystals would be suitable.

Tommy blinks.

Since when was he such a professional on crystals and gemstones? He'd only been any good with the enchantments and a rough way of carving his enchantments into them.

(You can instead blame this on the author who once loved to sew clothing with gemstones on them)

He sighs, and takes a step back from his handiwork. He's done a good bit of progress today, making things like these. Cufflinks, for one, seems to be a good present for Technoblade.

Tommy had grabbed some of his gems from his stash, and had repurposed some of the rubies into something he thinks would look wonderful. Ruby cufflinks seemed to be a good idea.

He doesn't quite like it though. Cufflinks were often used with full attire. Technoblade, when he's around Tommy, often didn't use cufflinks.

He frowns, and he grabs another piece of jewelry he'd stolen off of the Sapphire palace back when he was a toddler. This one is a dangling piece of gold, one that had two parts to it. Technoblade often wore an emerald earring on his right ear, and nothing else. Tommy wonders if he could convince Technoblade to wear something on his right ear.

He could, and he could place a curse of binding on it-- a modified sort, of course. The type that makes it feasible for the owner to remove it at will, but not when someone else does. He's been researching into that.

Tommy sighs, and instead places the standard protection enchantments onto it before finally calling it a day. The cufflinks, at least, were polished enough to give to his brother. The emeralds will have to wait another day, when he's actually done with researching more into a different branch of the Curse of Binding (and perhaps even the Curse of Vanishing).

He hides the jewels in the workbench's drawer, save for the Rubies. He has to do something for them so he could finally get the mending to stick-- it'd break in single use because of how potent the Thorns he'd attached onto it are. Even unbreaking won't salvage it.

Tommy pockets the rubies, and exits Ranboo's room so he could head to the garden again. This was what he was initially doing, in the first place. He was allowing the enchantment to pick up the natural mana in the air, which often thrived around plant life and in stagnant life in general.

He descends Ranboo's tower, and enters the North Wing's main hall. He could go to his room, but he... doesn't want to. Something about today feels excruciatingly warm. He doesn't feel right. It doesn't settle well with him.

Normally he would be out to request some ice cream from the kitchen staff, but the mere thought of entering the Sapphire palace felt off to him.

He continues walking towards the garden, where he knows he could find something else to bide his time with. Gardening. Right, just so his rubies could gather up the mana that's naturally accumulated in the air.

Tommy places a hand on his chest, and he feels something searing and worrying, numb and dull, but so present. Something like a muffled alarm--!

Tommy looks to the side, peeks at the window,

And the sight of it makes him balk. The bushes are on fire.

The flames refract on the surface of the window he's looking through, and he could briefly and barely see the expression of horror on his face when he's seen the arson on his literal front yard

Tommy steps back, hides in the curtain. He stills his breathing, the same way he did when he's faced death multiple times before. Tommy shuts his eyes, trying to ignore the buzzing fear in his ears and the feeling of static in his limbs when he feels yet again the paralyzing effects that fear has got on his body.

Tommy clutches the cloth on his chest, as if he was trying to grasp at his rapidly beating heart and muffling it so he could hide from whatever is doing this. He doesn't have to look again to see.

He is a survivor. He has applied many methods to survive, has created and pioneered ways to save his own skin no matter what the circumstances were.

This isn't the first time he'd evade death, and this will not be the last either.

He stalks the walls, making sure that he is never in plain sight, always within crevices and behind the pillars that could hide him as he stalks through the halls.

Tommy, as he is now, is weak. He's been weak many times before and lived. This isn't an issue. He can live. He has to live.

Tommy looks at the garden below him, just for a short glance, and he sees the lake that he once nearly died in. In the distance, he also sees the empty, two-seated tea table that he and Technoblade often sit at when they have their time together.

The chairs are toppled over, and so is the table. The glass frame of its surface is shattered, creating sparkles across the soft grass. Tommy swallows nervously, tries to swallow his tears at the loss of yet another attachment.

It's just a table, he says. It's just a pair of chairs.

It's just a garden, he tries to convince himself as he sees the beautiful trees burn before his eyes. Just a garden.

Tommy shuts his eyes, and he blinks the tears away. He needs to get somewhere safe. He needs to--

He looks to his left, and he finds that the room where he and Wilbur often spend their time during 'lectures' discussing bullshit about the empire and its people, and the hierarchy and the stage runners. He sees the doors opened, wide.

And he sees the furniture of it ruined. Destroyed. The wooden frame of Tommy's favorite chair is shattered into splinters and his table is tipped over to the side. The paper, the ones that Technoblade had gifted him from before, had been scattered all over the floor and stained with boot prints that dirty the evidence that Technoblade had thought of him while he was out there.

That dirtied the evidence that Technoblade, his brother, loved him.

It's just paper, Tommy thinks. It's just a chair. He mourns. It's just a room among countless of other rooms, many of which could serve as a better venue for studying.

Tommy moves along, more aware of his footprints than anything or anyone could expect from a child his age.

He calms his breathing, makes it steady. He makes sure not to whimper, nor cry.

Tommy can see the servants round up in one corner, soldiers clad in dirty brown clothing aiming their swords at them threateningly, raising the palm of their hands against them whenever they'd even so much as move.

Servants. Those are people. Those are...

Those are his people, kind people, the ones who'd replaced the old once and had adored him. Who'd looked at him with reverence whenever he'd walk around the palace with a goofy grin on his face.

Tommy can't leave this. Not like this. Not to these people.

He pauses. He doesn't have to do anything.

Tommy can run. No one will blame him for running. He is a kid, he hasn't even reached ten years old. He can book it out of there, and any survivors wouldn't even know that he had the opportunity to help their peers.

But when Tommy sees them crying, he can't help but feel his heart clench at the sight. They...

They only want to live.

Tommy steps out of the shade, shocked at even his own audacity. He sees one of his servants recognize his frame in the distance despite the tears welling in her eyes, and she shakes her head in fear. He can't hear her, but she's repeatedly saying no.

She looks like she's dreading.

"Oi!" Tommy shouts from the top of his lungs, and he feels his heart race, and it's beating so loud and so fast in his ears that he can't help but feel himself be frightened at the mere sounds that is coming from his own body. Can they hear it to?

Can they hear the way he's fearing for his life, with the way they look at him with so much fear in their eyes?

"Fuck off, dickheads!" Tommy yells, and this finally grabs the attention of the masked perpetrators.

He spots them turn, slowly, and he steps back when they regard him with a slow, burning anger in their eyes.

Tommy's eyes draw towards their chest.

He sees a golden pin.

Tommy should recognize it, but now... is not the time. He turns tail and fucking books it. He runs, and when he turns his head he counts how many there are behind him, chasing him with reckless abandon.

It makes him suspect that maybe he's the primary subject of their terror today.

Tommy thinks that it should really be the other way around.

He reaches the staircase. Tommy grits his teeth at the sight of the people below-- those aren't soldiers, at least not of the palace's. They're dressed crudely, in garb that had been unpolished

and dirty. There's dirt all over the floor, and Tommy can't help but think about all the cleaning up that the servants will have to do after this.

Tommy slides down the stairs, knowing that there's nowhere else that he could go to. They're far away enough from the stairs for Tommy to be able to land safely and continue running.

He jumps onto the rail, and he looks behind him as three of his chasers come into an abrupt stop, with one of them falling down the flights of stairs after halting too late and sliding down the steps.

Tommy looks straight ahead again, and he sees the enemies on the ground floor running towards where he was likely to land.

Fuckers.

Tommy slips off of the rails midway through, screaming bloody fucking mercy as he does, and he tries to remember how he survived rough falls in his previous lives-- life.

Life.

He lands on his feet, initially, but he shifts the weight forward as he lands, and he rolls, allowing his arms to receive some of the brunt of the impact. He doesn't give himself time to assess if he did good or not-- he just keeps running.

Tommy looks behind him-- there's a considerable lot of them running and chasing after him, and

There's one with a bow.

Fuck.

The instant he hears the whizz of an arrow he drops his head, and he feels the air sharp beside his ear, just barely missing him. Tommy hisses at it, realizing how close he was to getting hit. Two or three of them have a bow-- he couldn't count.

Tommy doesn't have the time to. Not when he could hear yet another set of the strings rubbing against wood, creaking at the bend-- he changes his direction, but

The young prince grasps his shoulder, feeling something sharp sting it. It's not the time to assess how deep it is. It's only important that he fucking runs. That he gets out of there as soon as he can. Run, he has to live. He has to fucking live.

Tommy doesn't dare shut his eyes,

Not when every blink he does has a memory flashing beneath his lids.

Tommy has to see Technoblade again. He has to see his brother again--

He shouts when another sharp sting hits his ankle-- it isn't deep, fortunately, but he could feel something pool at the bottom of his shoe.

The blond winces, but he keeps running. It's what he's good at. It's what allowed him to live this fucking long-- no, not in this life, but running has served its purpose in so many other times that it's become something much of his identity. A fragment of him, that makes him Tommy.

He keeps running, before he bumps into someone--

Tommy screams at the impact, pushes away the hands that are holding onto him.

"Tommy!" It's

It's Sam.

He is wearing armor, and he is practically drenched in blood. There are patches of his skin that are sizzling, boiling almost, and the scales continue to spark-- but never the ones that are in contact with Tommy. He looks up at the rest of them, sees them fast approaching with their weapons.

He tugs at Sam, only to realize that the man is firmly holding him.

He flinches when he hears an arrow whizz, but is relieved at the sound of it hitting something-- a shield, he realizes. Sam has a shield on him.

He stops resisting for a moment, and he lets himself be carried by him. "Sam!" Tommy says, and he's just realizing that he was crying with the way that he sounds when he screamed Sam's name in both relief and delight. Sam is here, he's going to protect him, he's going to save him--

"It's okay, Tommy, It's okay." He cradles him, attempting to shield him from the soldiers that are fast approaching behind him. Tommy whimpers,

"Sam, they--"

"I'll protect you." Sam says, and Tommy could almost feel the anger in Sam's voice when he says it. He could see the rage lighting his eyes green and causing the scales on his skin to sizzle like an explosive, prepared to take everything down with him. "I need you to run, okay? Run towards the throne room, and hide in you and your brother's secret place. Can you do that for me?" Sam asks.

Tommy nods, frantically-- "Sam, how about you?"

"I'm strong," Sam says. "But I can only be strong when I can't hurt you, okay? Do you understand me, Prince?"

He nods again, and the army behind him is looming, fast approaching. Tommy hadn't realized that he'd placed this much of a distance between them.

"Take this." Sam says, curling a simple and hefty dagger in his hand. It's heavy enough for him to have to use both his hands to use, but light enough for him to be able to run with it. "There'll be soldiers ahead, they're going to-- they're going to help you, okay?"

Sam stands when the army is about two meters closer-- Tommy feels the adrenaline kick in and flood his senses, dulling his hearing when he needs it the most.

He could only really understand what Sam is saying when he reads his lips.

"Stay safe, my prince." He says, and he faces the army, the squadron of invaders headon.

Tommy turns and he runs. He knows the throne room. He can go to the throne room no problem. He can go to that safe place, where Technoblade takes him to nap sometimes, and he can stay there and hide. He can muffle his breath, his heartbeat, and he can hide until someone, anyone, until Technoblade can find him and save him.

When he comes across the first body, though, he feels himself freeze.

It isn't a sight he's stranger to. He's seen corpses before, seen it on the battlefield. Seen people die, countless of times.

But seeing it here, in this castle, in this body that had been nothing but cherished and adored-- he can't help but freeze in fear.

He can't escape it, can he?

She always comes running after him.

All he had to do, was to keep running.

Tommy gasps, choking on his breath at the familiar sensation, at the familiar, yet excruciating feeling. He gasps, feeling the sensation of something sharp and horrible in his stomach-- he looks down, and he sees something shiny protruding where there shouldn't be.

He looks up, whimpering, and he sees it.

A stranger, with hatred in his eyes, keeping a hand on the blade that is through Tommy's stomach right now.

All he had to do was run.

Tommy chokes at the pain, prepared for the familiar steps. He'd choke out blood, soon, but for now he can't help but feel nothing but pain--

The stranger takes the blade back, pulls it out of Tommy. He's prepared to have that familiar scarlet gushing out of him.

Except that's not quite what happens.

Something shatters in his pockets-- warm, searing, but nothing as painful as the blade that had gone through his abdomen.

The stranger's lips gurgles with it red instead. He watches, stunned, as the man who had attempted at his life sinks to his knees, and falls face flat against the marble tiles that had

once been carpeted.

Tommy feels for the injury, but he finds nothing but torn cloth.

He...

He doesn't have much time. He has to run. He has to continue running.

Tommy doesn't stop anymore. He doesn't have much opportunity to. He rushes towards the throne room, and he doesn't stop once despite the sight of the people he recognizes on the floor, staring somewhere. He doesn't care to look where. Not now, not now when he doesn't want to join them, yet.

There is the sound of fighting. He recognizes that sound. Hears it all the time in the battlefield. Tommy remains vigilant, but he keeps running. Lets them fight for him. Let them die for him.

Why are they dying for him?

What has he done for them?

And why do the strangers want to kill him? What has he done to them?

Tommy wants to cry.

He can't.

He shouldn't.

Not when he has to be running, when he has to keep vigilant, when he has to keep himself safe so he could live. This is what it's all about, isn't it? All so he could live?

Tommy runs. For the first time in so long, he feels a genuine, bone chilling fear. It's jarring to feel it again, this mix of paralysis and nausea and adrenaline. Fight and flight are fighting against one another and Tommy, the rational side of him at least, knows that flight is the only viable option.

He flinches at the sound of something crashing, something large against the halls he once thought was safe.

Fuck, fuck he hasn't felt this so scared in so long. He should have been used to this type of fear, right? He's spent more than half of the first decade of his life being afraid of death, being afraid of Techno, but now that that's changed it's suddenly a stranger to him again.

And it's worse, somehow.

Because while wit had saved him before, it won't save him for this one.

He hears a crash of the window, someone is shouting and Tommy is too riddled with fear to realize who it is. He hasn't gotten any time for that, because whatever those people are after,

Tommy knows it'd be him.

Tears well up in his eyes, and that irrational, childish and impossible want crawls into the back of his throat as if he wants to wail for someone. Anyone. No, not anyone.

He wants his older brother. He protects him. He protects him all the time.

It feels so incredibly frightening without Technoblade, he realizes. He just wants him back. Please come back.

Tommy cries out a silent wail of relief when he sees the doors to the throne room.

There's not much fanfare. He opens it the slightest bit, not caring if anyone could see him, and he runs into the room. The place has a feeling of security around it. Feels like Tommy could sink at the doors and call it a day.

But he's thought that about this entire castle.

And his garden, the one he adores sitting at with his brother, Technoblade, is burning.

He doesn't stop. He doesn't allow himself to stop. Tommy runs towards the throne, and he makes sure he leaves no trace of himself leading towards it. He knows from experience that there is no place considered safe if people know you're hiding in it.

Tommy slides into the covers of the curtains, and he keeps himself silent.

He surrounds himself with pillows and cushions, uncaring if he'd stain them. He needs them. He needs this. He needs the comfort, the weight of something on him because otherwise he's not sure if he could stay grounded without it.

He's safe, for now. He's safe, and he can assess the damages.

Tommy grabs the rubies in his pockets, and he finds it pulverized into shards. Sharp shards of glass, emptied out of mana and now deemed useless other than to serve as sand. He puts it back into his pocket. He grasps his shoulder, and he finds that it's not bleeding. The only remains of the blood is on his clothes from where the injuries must have bled through. He looks at his heal.

Nothing.

Tommy almost laughs-- he does, and it ends up as a sob because here he is,

Survived solely out of luck.

He curls into himself, feeling his life be in the end of a fickle line of thread. Dangling over his head above reach. He can't do anything about it, everything he did, everything he managed to survive off of. It was out of

There is a creak in the throne room.

Tommy's breath hitches, but he instantly raises his hands to his mouth to muffle whatever sound dared to leave his lips. Fuck. Fuck, why is he here? Isn't he supposed to be safe? Isn't this place supposed to be the safest in the empire?

Tommy shuts his eyes when he could hear the sound of heels clacking against the stone tiles, once polished, left dirty and a mess.

Comedically, in the back of his head he can't help but imagine Technoblade's disdain for such a messy room. Maybe he'd get twice the amount of servants he currently has in his payroll to get this place up and running like he wants it again.

Tommy is comforted by the thought.

Surely the news that the palace is under attack would lead to the Empire in panic, right? Surely Technoblade would get here as quick as he could, to protect Tommy. He would. Technoblade would do that.

Tommy inhales slowly, hearing the footsteps in the room grow louder and louder. The echoes are being swallowed by the curtains that go from the ceiling to the floor, but it doesn't hide the fact that he could hear the click of heels against the tiles.

He can hear the shuffle of curtains. The ripping of cloth. Tommy whimpers at the sound of it-- they're cutting something. He doesn't understand what it is.

He can't see. He's enshrouded by the sheer blackness of this small crevice that he's hiding in, blocked out by the curtains at the door and hidden behind the throne.

But Tommy can hear. He can hear it all, in the darkness of this small room. He could hear his heart beating, and he tries to silence it in fear that maybe out there, it can be heard too.

"Where the fuck is that little brat." He hears a growl from the distance, and Tommy can't help but whimper-- muffled by his hands and the pillow he's hiding behind.

Then there's another jarring sound from outside his hiding spot. It's the door slamming open, and slamming shut in succession.

"Get on the fucking floor if you don't want to get hurt." The stranger says, and Tommy assumes that he's saying this to the person who had just entered. "I will fucking slaughter everyone in this God damn palace-!"

"Try me, fucker." Tommy's breath hitches at the sound of the newcomer's voice.

That's Wilbur.

That's Wilbur, and he's here, and Tommy doesn't know if he's armed or anything of the sort-- he just knows that he's not the type for battle. He has the mind for magic, and the mind for strategy.

But Wilbur can't use magic here, not while he's Wilbur and not the Prince of Song.

Tommy hears the man take quick steps in succession, and there are a mix of two sets of paces clicking against the floor and muffled sometimes if they'd decided to step on the rugs. Tommy curls into himself when he hears Wilbur grunt-- did something hit him?

Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.

He doesn't know what to do. He doesn't know what to do, how to help, how to do anything that could prevent his brother from getting hurt. Tommy feels his hands curl in frustration.

He doesn't want to die.

He doesn't want Wilbur to die.

So in order or priority, Tommy, just as in every universe, chooses one thing over another.

And he steps out, holding the dagger that Sam had given to him. He takes a look in front of him, and he sees Wilbur just evading, unarmed, the man who had been tearing the curtains off of this room with his sword in fury. Vandalizing the place that Tommy sees is his home.

The man doesn't see him, nor does Wilbur, in his efforts to avoid the attacks of the man.

Tommy can see, though, where he's taking the brunt of his efforts from.

In the corner of Wilbur's eyes, Tommy can see the way that his brown eyes would glimmer with sparkles of blue. Tommy feels his gut sink.

If he continues, he's going to lose the magic that's covering his eyes and his identity.

Tommy lunges, and he manages to sink the dagger into the stranger's leg.

"TOMMY!" Wilbur shouts when the man swings his sword elsewhere, aimed at whatever had attacked his leg. Tommy screams when he feels the tip of the sword swing just enough to graze the surface of his chest, enough on the skin to cause him to bleed.

He knows that it was superficial, though. He knows that he can't die from this. Still, it fucking hurt.

Tommy grasps his chest, and he takes multiple steps back so he can back away from the stranger.

"Found you, you little shit." The man growls, before he lunges to grab him and take Tommy by the collar. He takes the squirming Tommy by the neck, and he holds him by the torso until he's in the position to edge the sword against the prince's neck.

"Let go of him!" Wilbur demands, but he has no weapon. He has no weapon. The only other weapon there is, is the one sunken into the man's legs.

"You're in no fucking position to demand shit from me, bastard." The man hisses, only placing the cold metal closer to Tommy's neck.

Tommy stops squirming, in fear that he'd cut his throat.

He can feel his eyes water in a cocktail of distress, fear, and spiteful anger. He's fucking pissed. He's fucking pissed, because in any other body he might have been able to take this fucker down without even so much as a shard of glass. He could defeat a man with a gun, or a bow, or--

His train of thought is cut off when he sees the man backing off, with Tommy in his hold. "Stay the fuck back." The man says.

"Let the prince go."

"Fuck no." He growls. "This little shit and his family is the reason so many people lost theirs." The man hisses. "This little shit is why my baby cousin died-- do you fucking get the blood on his hands?"

Tommy is angry: "I didn't fucken hurt anyone!"

"You and your whiny fucking ass killed a hundred people!" He growls, "Exile was just a pretty little fucking way to say it."

He doesn't understand. He doesn't know. Tommy hasn't done anything to deserve this, to deserve any of this.

"Please, let him go." Wilbur ends up pleading, he has his hands raised, stretched out as if placatingly. "He's just a kid--"

"So were the people this fucker killed." He hisses. "They hadn't even reached eighteen when they faced exile in the South."

His gut sinks. Exile in the south. He has to know about it. He has to--

He remembers the brief meetings with Schlatt, earlier on. He recalls that he had business with Technoblade-- they don't often have business, the two can run their own through letters and brief notices. He remembers that from the book. Remembers it to be the reason why he needed an excuse to put Wilbur in the palace in the first place.

"You don't fucking know, do you?" The man hisses, angry.

He doesn't. He doesn't get what he's-- he's trying to put the pieces together. He's trying.

"I don't know," Tommy says, voice wet and desperate. "I'm sorry, I don't know. I won't do it again, please--!"

The man pauses, and he fucking bellows out a laugh. "Of fucking course!" His voice booms. "Of course you wouldn't!" He says, and he tightens his grip on Tommy. "Because you won't have the opportunity to." He says,

The man moves quick, with Wilbur in quick succession-- keeping his fair distance so that the man doesn't hurt the prince.

He's out of tricks-- both the gems that Tommy had were already broken and shattered from the enchantment taking its toll.

Tommy looks at Wilbur, and he looks so frustrated and angry. It almost makes him sad to see him like this, to be placed in such a similar position as in the book. Except the executioner isn't someone that could betray them.

"Wil," He ends up pleading, the part of him that's a kid wanting his brother's help.

Wilbur looks heartbroken, almost torn. "It's okay, sweetheart, it's okay." He says placatingly,

The man only sneers. He walks to the edge of the room, towards the windows, and he smashes the window with the blunt of the sword's handle: "Time to make a scene, my prince." He says mockingly, before he grabs Tommy by the collar and dangles him at the window.

Below him, Tommy could hear people screaming: "MY PRINCE!" The servants wail uncontrollably, and there are those who cheer-- Tommy can't recognize anyone's voices, not when the drumming of his heart is too fucking loud in his ears.

Tommy's small hands grasp and claws at the man's hands, gripping tight on it.

He can feel the cloth tearing where his hands are gripping on it, and Tommy tries to relieve its weight by pulling at the man's hands.

He wants to live. He wants to live. He wants to live.

Please.

For a brief moment, he can see Wilbur in the back, torn. So torn, distraught between a decision.

Tommy, selfishly, wishes that he could do something. Anything.

If he does, he knows that he would die for the sake of Wilbur. He would do anything to repay him. Please, help him.

He doesn't say any of these. He doesn't plead any of this, not when his breath hitches at every exhale and when sobs threaten to break at his throat. Tommy grips at life so desperately it almost hurts.

Tommy shuts his eyes, unable to bear the look on Wilbur's face alongside the fear of death on his neck.

He lets it sit. He lets him hear. There are people crying at him, both for his mercy and for his fall.

What has he done to grant him either?

He doesn't really know, and he's not sure he'd be granted the opportunity to.

Tommy's grip loosens,

He thinks he can hear Sam in the distance. The screaming starts to turn into a ruckus of commands and cheers and screaming and crying and wailing--

It's starting to get overwhelming. Overwhelming, along the accompanying, dulling fear of death.

Tommy keeps his eyes closed.

"How brave."

He can feel the grip on his collar loosen, and the height and loudness of the onlookers from below begin to increase as he inches slowly down from the man's grip.

Until there's an impact.

Tommy's eyes are forced open at the sudden and new force that's pulling him into the safety of the throne room, and he could see Wilbur right in front of him, looking at him.

His breath hitches--

Wilbur's eyes are blue. Like sapphires, glittering right as Tommy is looking into them.

"You're okay, Tommy. You're alright." He says, repeating it like a mantra for Tommy's ears, drowning out the sound of his heart beating. The sound of his voice is different in his ears while it rings. It sounds different, unfamiliar almost. He grips at Tommy, hugging him like the boy is his lifeline when ultimately, it's the other way around.

This gives Tommy the opportunity to see behind Wilbur from the crook of his neck and his shoulder.

What he sees is a frightening sight.

The man, the one who had grabbed Tommy by the neck and hung him over what is easily a forty foot drop, had sunken to the floor, unconscious-- no, dead. Above him is a trail of scarlet, still dripping down to where he rests.

Tommy can't stop looking at it. It's... it's horrifying. It's terrifying to see, especially when it's Wilbur who had been the one to do this.

Still, Wilbur had held Tommy. He rocked him in his arms, comforting him. Tommy can feel his hands run through his curls and it almost lulls him to sleep if it weren't for the look on the dead man's face. His eyes are still open.

The man's eyes are brown.

"Wilbur," he calls,

"It's okay, Tommy. You're here. I'm here with you." He keeps repeating, and from there Tommy could recognize that something was off. The sound of Wilbur's voice wasn't the one he'd known— it was more melodic. Tommy could feel the man's heart beat in his own chest.

Tommy pulls away, and Wilbur lets him. He takes this opportunity to look at him. Really look at him. Tommy gasps-- "Wil," he reaches up at Wilbur's face, "Wilbur, you look--"

Wilbur reaches up to his own face, confused, before the realization sinks in.

He looks rounder, with the same crook of the nose, and the same shape of the eyes, but the face looked younger. So much younger, but even that had been blurry in Tommy's vision. He doesn't understand what he's seeing. For a second he could see fragments of violet along the side of Wilbur's face.

Most importantly, and most startlingly, he could see it. His eyes. They were blue. Blue like Tommy's, and sparkling, nearly glowing underneath the shade of the curtains.

"You're--"

Wilbur places a finger on his lips.

Tommy feel distraught. This is it. This is his out. He could reveal himself to be his brother, come out of the room with jeweled eyes and reveal himself to be Royalty.

But the man is silently pleading with him.

A secret-- why would he want to keep his eyes a secret anyway? He doesn't understand why, even during the Prince of Song. It had been something like keeping Theseus safe, but that's no longer the case here because there's nothing to keep safe now. He's loved, he won't be beheaded.

Right?

He realizes, though, that there's something quite wrong with that. He won't die by Technoblade's hand. He knows that. He's known that for a while, now. But there are people who want him dead. People who cheer at the mere sight of him dangling from the window of the throne room.

He imagines Wilbur in that position.

There won't be anyone to protect him, if that had been the case. Tommy is useless, unable to deal with magic without having to tug at these strings.

Tommy understands, though, Wilbur's wish, and with a determination he rests his smaller hands on Wilbur's eyes. The older one looks to be a little confused but he lets himself be held by the smaller boy.

Tommy focuses. Really focuses. He bides his time, lets himself remember that he's safe, and so is Wilbur. He's safe with his brother, and nothing will happen to them.

He feels the familiar wave of magic, the same thing Ranboo cast on him so that Tubbo didn't think he was anyone special.

Brown, right? He had to describe what brown looks like in his head.

Brown is the color of warmth, every time Wilbur looks at him. Brown is comfort. Something that's so achingly familiar with... something else he couldn't remember anymore. It's a color of humbleness, intelligence, something that's so strikingly fitting on those eyes.

Internally he refuses to think of how blue suits him more, afraid it'd ruin the spell. Ranboo said he cannot do magic, and that no one knows what would happen when the crystals in his eyes would continue to shatter. This seems more important though. His friend's reminder doesn't even come to mind while he tries to cover Wilbur's own sparkling sapphires.

He could feel the magic stick, and Tommy just needs to finish it. For Wilbur.

He could hear the sound of people approaching the room.

There's something crackling, the sound of something breaking. Glass shattering, crunching under a weight Tommy doesn't know. He thought that maybe it was the remnants of the window under his heel.

When Tommy removes his hands from Wilbur's eyes, he has brown eyes again. Just as its 'always' been. Tommy almost squishes Wilbur's face, trying to bring up the smallest bout of playfulness he's able to.

Tommy smiles. "Hi, Wil." Tommy greets, tone weak and soft and vulnerable.

Wilbur smiles back, but it doesn't quite reach his eyes, and he grabs Tommy's small hands. "Hi Tommy." He says,

And when they stand, and in Tommy's mind he could recognize that despite Wilbur towering normally above his head that there was something eerily wrong with the very fact that he was so tall, Wilbur carries Tommy by the hip. There is a secret hidden between the two of them.

He sees the door slam open, and the Warden enters alongside the Captain. Instead of looking intimidating and fearsome like he always has, he looks frightened, fearful of what he might see.

But he could see his tense shoulders sink in relief when he witnesses Tommy living and breathing. The green scales sizzle, and Tommy could see literal steam coming up from Sam's skin. "My prince," Sam sinks to his knees in front of him. "I'm so sorry, my prince."

Tommy frowns. He pats Wilbur to get him to go down on his feet.

Instead of saying anything, Tommy grabs Sam's neck and he wraps his arms around it. "Sam," He says, and he's even surprised at the sheer relief that he could hear from the tone of his voice. "Are we... is it over, Sam?"

Tommy feels Sam slowly place his large hands on his small back, and he lets himself be engulfed in a hug. "The cavalry has arrived." Sam says. "And we're safe."

Tommy sinks into his old. "Are you okay, Sam?" Tommy ends up asking, "You sound hurt."

Sam shakes his head. "I'm fine, your highness." Sam answers. "I'll be fine, with you, your highness." He says that term with such reverence. It almost feels heartbreaking.

He could hear it. The mourning in his voice. The way he sounds so frustrated and so relieved, but still bearing that grief in his voice.

"Can you carry me, Sam?" Tommy ends up asking. "I want to... I want to be held. Are you busy?"

Tommy looks up at Puffy, and she could see a similar look on her face. One that's pitiful, saddened and mourning. He doesn't understand why.

Tommy isn't dead.

"Of course, your highness." Sam says, and Tommy finally hears it. Gratefulness. Relief.

It's not him accepting an apology-- there was nothing to apologize for. He's just relieved. He's just happy he's alive, and feeling all of this. Seeing all of them.

When Sam draws to his full height, with Tommy in his arms, Tommy takes the opportunity to look at Wilbur.

He looks tired, but ultimately relieved.

This seems to be a common consensus.

"We're safe now?" Tommy asks.

"Yes, your highness." Sam answers. "You're safe, now."

Tommy shuts his eyes, and this time he doesn't see his life flashing before his eyes. "Good." He says. "Good." His voice is weaker, unstable when he repeats it. He curls his body in Sam's arms, and he lets his face sink into the crook of his shoulder.

Sam smells like gunpowder and metal. He reeks of something like iron. He doesn't care. he doesn't dare to think more about it. Tommy grabs Sam tighter.

With the relief of finally being able to, Tommy ends up crying. The tears that land on Sam's shoulders sizzle under the heat of the man's skin, but Tommy can't really bring himself to care. He can't, not when he's finally safe.

Sam rubs Tommy's back, soothing. He lets his fingers run through his curls while they walk towards the rest of the cavalry.

Tommy ends up sinking into the warm comfort of sleep.

He needs it, desperately.

Chapter End Notes

Yall were cheering for the wrong guy's bloodlust last chapter /hj

Anyway, not to meta-game, but it makes you wonder why eret showed up last chapter
huh

Also, I told ya, actions have consequences. You think there wouldn't be an uproar of
hundreds of people being sent to exile to die?

Aftermath

Chapter Notes

the comfort to your hurt <3

again, not beta-read, wrote this in a fucking DAY for the TWB event LMFAO (im having so much fun in it!)

Prompt: Dimensional travel / trapped in another dimension

Tommy wakes up in his bed at the sound of something crashing outside. He sits up frantically, and he slips off of the bed.

He doesn't recognize where he is. He doesn't trust this place.

The boy does it instinctively. He swings the windows open, and then he steps back from it. He hides, immediately, hides inside the closet, one that's so small that no one could assume that someone was hiding in it. He grabs something, anything that could serve as his defense, but all he finds is a brush.

The door to this room is slammed open.

He feels it immediately. The dread. The pressure in the air that reeks of death and anger and anguish. He feels the sharpness in his chest, digging into his heart despite having nothing injure him for the time he's been awake.

Tommy kicks himself further into the corner of the cupboard, and he covers his mouth to muffle his breath and the whimpers that might escape.

It feels like death. It feels like death. It feels like dying, to be in this small space, but Tommy perseveres, because inside in this small space is better than outside where there is the danger of someone killing him.

Tommy can hear them talking. One of them is angry, and the other seemed to be receiving the brunt of the anger, but he can't understand. Not when they're still there and he's still in this cramped space. Not when he's still in the danger of being caught. He should hear it. He should listen. Maybe they're looking for him. Maybe... maybe they're going to look for him in this cabinet.

He doesn't know. He doesn't know, but he needs to, so he can hide or run away. He sinks into the corner.

Tommy shuts his eyes, despite it already being dark.

He's safe here.

But it's so small.

It's too small.

Tommy releases a whimper.

He feels doomed when he hears them pause in the middle of their conversation. They heard him. They heard him. Oh fuck they heard him and he's going to die-

"Tommy?" The voice this time is weak, and soft, and it's placating and he can recognize the voice. He opens his eyes, and he only just saw that the door has already been opened.

Tommy looks up, and he sees it. Red eyes, gleaming in what little light there is in the room. Tommy knows those eyes, knows those eyes and trusts them. They're sharp, but the way it looks at him makes him feel safe. Makes him feel invincible for as long as he could stay in his arms.

"Techno?" He croaks out, and he feels his eyes water upon finally being able to recognize him.

Technoblade smiles at him-- he's smiling, as if he's trying to comfort him. Tommy remembers how a smile hardly comes to his lips. Now he's smiling for him, placatingly and sweetly, but sadly.

The older prince kneels in front of the cabinet, and he reaches a hand out. "Do you want to get out of there, Theseus?" He suggests.

And he does. He does, because he hates small spaces and the dark. He grabs the hand that's reaching out to him, and he pulls himself out of the dark.

When he's out, finally, he jumps at Technoblade, arms wrapped around his neck. "You're back." He says, "You're back." Tommy sobs into his shoulder.

"I am, Tommy, and I'm never going to leave you again." Technoblade says, and that's the best thing he's heard in a while.

Technoblade pulls away, and he brushes the curls off of Tommy's face. "Are you okay, Theseus? Are you hurt?"

Tommy feels his lips wobble. He shuts his eyes, remembering how close he was to dying. How easy it could have been to kill him right then and there, without Technoblade even knowing. He nods his head. "Where are you hurt, Theseus?" He asks.

Tommy points at his abdomen, where a phantom pain had been present. "Did someone hit you there?" He nods.

When Tommy opens his eyes, Technoblade is still in front of him, but he's looking at the other person in the room. Puffy has her arms crossed, looking distressed and concerned. "The

doctors have cleared him," She says. "For some reason, he hasn't physically sustained any injuries despite the fact that his attire at the end of it proving otherwise."

That makes sense, but he remembers there being a gash on his chest. Tommy places his hand on it, but he doesn't feel anything. Not the sharp pain of an open wound. He looks up at Technoblade, clueless.

Technoblade looks at Tommy. He looks at him, straight in the eyes. Technoblade frowns when he sees something in them. He gently holds Tommy's face, and he keeps Tommy's head still while he looks at his eyes.

"What happened to your eyes, Theseus?" Technoblade asks, and he could hear the concern and confusion in his voice.

Tommy frowns. "What's wrong with my eyes?" He asks.

Technoblade looks at it for a while longer with a frown on his face. The prince gently takes Tommy and sets him on his hip. "We're going to visit the mage that helped you." Technoblade says.

This only worries Tommy more.

When he gets past Puffy, Technoblade speaks out: "Keep this place safe. Make sure that the survivors are regretting their deeds in the chambers under." He says.

And Tommy blinks. The chambers under. There are underground chambers in this place—rather, the prison. He recalls it vaguely, in the Prince of Song. William had seen it once, and had never returned again after witnessing the horrors.

Technoblade moves quickly, enough that Tommy is only barely able to see her reaction to what Technoblade had requested.

Tommy observes the aftermath of the invasion. He sees the castle overturned, various expensive furniture either shredded or shattered against walls. There are scrapes of weapons across the halls, and the curtains are either burnt or torn.

He can see some blood, most of which had been half-heartedly wiped away leaving the little evidence he's seeing right then and there. Tommy hides his eyes against Technoblade's shoulder. He feels so tired looking at it.

It's a frightening sight. A frightening sight to behold.

He tries to remember if there's anything in the books like this, but all he can remember is the ending, when William wins and triumphs against the Imperial Crown Prince and takes the crown for himself.

Tommy shudders, remembering how the man died. The man holding him right now died in the book, and it had once been a cathartic sort of ending after having had to read how he'd treated everyone like shit.

But he's kind, and he's gentle, and Technoblade will never hurt anyone with Tommy around.

Right?

Tommy opens his eyes, and he finds that he's approaching one of the rooms for where people could meet privately. Tommy wonders if any of the other rooms would lead to nothing but ruin.

"Tommy!" Ranboo says, and he rushes towards the two-- keeping a distance because Technoblade still seemed excruciatingly pissed at him.

Technoblade raises a sword. "Act with caution, Wizard." He points his sword.

"If you're here, you're here for a reason, Prince." Ranboo spits out, and despite his light tone there is still that arrogance that he's never heard of before in his voice. "He is my *friend*."

This seemed to have irked Technoblade, just by the slight twitch of his lower lid. "You left your friend in this castle alone."

"You did the same to your brother."

There is a cold silence shared between them, and Tommy's heart sinks into his gut. Why are they like this? Why is *Ranboo* like this?

"Techie," Tommy says, tone placating and lighter. The pressure and tension in the room is... difficult to bear. "It's okay, he's my friend. We can trust him," Tommy says.

He doesn't give.

"*Please?*"

Technoblade sighs, and he sets Tommy down to the floor. Tommy immediately rushes to Ranboo and feels himself encased in a near-crushing hug. "Tommy," he hears Ranboo cry out. "I'm so sorry, Tommy. I didn't know this would happen-- I didn't think anything would-!"

"It's okay, Ranboo." Tommy says, just glad for the hug and their presence. "It's okay." He melts into Ranboo's arms. God, he would never admit this out side of right now and out loud, but he's so fucking glad that Ranboo only got here during the aftermath. He doesn't know--

He wouldn't know what to do if he'd lost his best friend.

"I did not come here simply for you to reunite with my brother." Technoblade's voice snaps them out of their temporary relief. Tommy pulls away, curious about what his brother wants from his friend.

Ranboo makes a displeased sound, before stepping back. He bows, and presents with the appropriate greeting. "What is it that you need, my Prince?" He asks. His voice is taut, as if he's barely restraining the urge to snap back at him.

"Theseus' eyes." Technoblade crosses his arms. "Do you know anythin' about it." It's not even a question. It's easily a demand.

He glances at Tommy's eyes, and honestly, Tommy didn't expect Ranboo to be such a great actor in the face of Technoblade. "I will have to look into it." Ranboo says, which is a lie because he remembers that Ranboo had noted something about it.

The warning. He told Tommy not to do anymore magic, not to tug anymore on the strings that made this world.

Tommy had used the magic of this world when he wasn't supposed to. He remembers that now. Fuck.

He doesn't know what this means. Doesn't know what it would lead to.

"What's wrong with my eyes?" Tommy ends up asking.

Ranboo looks at him, eyes sharp and observant. Tommy doesn't understand why he looks like this, why he's acting like this. The Ranboo he knows isn't so... angry. This one looks infuriated, almost. "It looks less like shards, and more like dusts of... chunky glitter." He says for him. "This shouldn't mean anything bad for the prince." He says, but to Tommy it only means that this is just a further topic for conversation.

"How are you certain."

"I'm not." Ranboo retorts. "All I know is that as long as the Prince doesn't indulge in the complexities of magic through his own hands, it will not aggravate these symptoms." He explains. Ranboo looks at Technoblade. "However, now that you're here, Your Imperial Highness," Ranboo bows, "in the future, I hope you learn to whitelist certain individuals through the barrier you put in the palace when you'd be gone."

And,

The picture is starting to make sense now.

Magic in the palace is banned save for those who are of royal blood, and those who the reigning power of the palace chooses to allow. Ranboo had been one of them.

Tommy turns towards Technoblade, and he sees the man's jaw clenched. "Techno?" Tommy asks.

"Let's go, Theseus." Technoblade says. "Let's get you to your bed." He's cold again.

Tommy looks back at Ranboo, and he sees his gaze harden at the sight of the older prince. He understands it, vaguely.

When his gaze meets his friend's, he notices that the scathing look had softened into a warm and guilty one. Tommy returns the same, tilting his head and waving before jogging to meet Technoblade who had silently taken Tommy into his arms.

Before leaving the room, Technoblade pauses.

"We will continue this discussion later." Technoblade says, and he allows the servants to shut the door behind him.

"Theseus." Technoblade slowly puts Tommy down to his feet. "Before you go to sleep tonight, I have to-- I need you to remember this path, remember this path when you wish to go through it. You understand?"

Tommy blinks, and he nods.

Technoblade takes him by the hand, and he walks towards the West Wing. Just like before, on his birthday, it looks like it's shifting into something else. The halls are less and less marred with the signs of the invaders, and more clean yet abandoned.

And he finds the stain-glass windows again. There he is, the man with blond hair.

The rays of light are depicted behind him like light that he'd emitted. His eyes are shut, and serene, and he holds a crown at the middle of his torso. He stands tall before the silhouettes of people who looked as if they were facing him, bowing before him with reverence and offerings. There were four of them— one offered grain, the other a sword, the other gold, and the other a scepter.

The wings of light look odd, looks darkened at the edges. Tommy looks at it, and he realizes that it looks burnt at the edges. The vandals had likely caused this, trying to burn this window despite it being tempered.

That seemed to be odd, though, seeing that the rest of the image remains unscathed.

He and Technoblade quickly pass it, though.

It's as if Technoblade doesn't want to see it.

Tommy walks quicker to walk at Technoblade's pace, and he tugs at his hands so he could urge the man to slow down.

Technoblade, as if lost in his mind, pauses and looks down at his brother. "I'm sorry, Theseus." Technoblade says apologetically, likely referring to the way he's been walking around and expecting the boy to catch up. This is the most sincere that he's gotten Technoblade consecutively. "I--"

"It's okay," Tommy says immediately. "I understand. I was mad too."

The older prince take Tommy into his arms when Tommy raises his arms slightly, as if requesting it. "Why were you mad?" He asks, resting Tommy's weight onto his hips.

"They were destroying it." Tommy said, "I saw them burn it down."

"Burn what down?"

"Our forever." He answers. It felt cheesy. It felt like something so fucking shallow, but to him, seeing the place he and his brother had frequently sat at get so easily toppled over. The flowers he'd admire whenever he'd have nothing to talk about, they were burnt and he'd seen the fire fall as the branches burned off. "I felt really angry when I saw them do that." Tommy rests his forehead against Technoblade's shoulder. "And I felt angrier when I remembered that you couldn't stop them." He adds.

Because it was true. He promised to keep him safe forever, to keep their happiness safe forever. He had a right to be angry.

But Technoblade couldn't be faulted. No one could have seen it coming. Not even Tommy, who is supposed to know the most out of all of them. He doesn't understand why they'd go after him. This wasn't ever supposed to happen. Nothing like this is supposed to happen.

"I'm sorry, Theseus." Technoblade says, and he caresses the back of Tommy's head gently. Ages ago, Tommy would have been frightened of it. This hand could have never been this gentle.

However, he's come to know this hand as comfort and shelter. He knows Technoblade better than anything, even that damned book that has doomed him into a fate of dying.

Tommy doesn't know how to accept that apology. He doesn't feel like it.

He would have died, if not for the sheer, dumb fucking luck. Tommy feels the phantom pains of the sword in his abdomen, a gruesome reminder of the many injuries he'd gotten in his life before this one.

"I'm never leaving you again." Technoblade ends up promising instead, with Tommy's silence.

Tommy pulls away, and he shows Technoblade his signature smile. "Promise?"

"I promise." He answers. Technoblade, places a hand on Tommy's head again, and briefly he'd placed the boy's head under his chin, as if there was no other way to tuck him closer to him. Technoblade, after a moment, had pulled away. "Theseus, remember, I need you to keep in mind the directions I'm showing you right now." Technoblade says,

He tilts his head. "Where are we even going?" Tommy asks. "Is it to your special music place?"

Technoblade shakes his head, and he begins walking again. "No, not this time." He says. "But this is a place that only you or I could go to." He says. "When you're in danger, you go straight here and you never look back."

"Will the bad guys not follow?"

"They won't." Technoblade tells him. "They can never follow you to this place. Not even if they try." He says,

So Tommy takes heed of it. Takes heed of their secret, walks on ahead.

Tommy and Technoblade come across a door. It has paintings all over it, drawn and painted on by children. He could see how the marks had faded, turned lighter.

Time didn't seem to treat this place gently, he notices. Much unlike the rest of the rooms in the palace.

Technoblade points a finger at it, and just like before a dial of words both familiar and unfamiliar extend from his finger in a circle. He reads it, sees it glimmer before his eyes, and sees it turn faint and disappear into the wood of the door.

He puts Tommy down. "Try opening the door." He says,

So Tommy does, and he tugs at the knob, and pushes at the door.

It reveals to him a room. It's large, larger than even his room, with a large chandelier hanging from the ceiling that extends as high as his own room. In the room, there are two large beds that rest on either side of one another. Both are colored blue, with the duvet the color of the sky and the pillows the color of the night.

The room is a mess of identities, he realizes, a mirror of either side, save for the door.

Tommy sees one side full of papers and messes of books stacked onto one another, and the other side is a mess of clothes and instruments-- he spots the writing desk on one side emptier than the other, with the other one full of trinkets and decor.

"What is this place, Techno?" Tommy asks, looking at the room.

When he isn't given a response, Tommy looks at Technoblade to see what he looks like and-

He looks heartbroken. He looks to be the most vulnerable, looking into this room.

"It's the safest place in the Palace, Theseus." Is all he says, and his eyes draw towards the right of the room. It lingers there, longingly, almost.

Tommy looks at it.

What is this-- it takes him a moment, but he realizes it finally.

It's his and his brother's room. His and William's room, when they were children. Tommy feels his heart ache at the sight of it.

He wants to reveal Wilbur to Technoblade. He wants to reunite them. Technoblade loves his brother, his family, and Tommy is just proof of it.

He looks away from Technoblade, and towards the room where the memories had likely hurt him the most. His invulnerable brother.

Whatever qualms Wilbur has against revealing his identity fully, Tommy has to be able to fix it. He has to. Fuck the plot. Fuck everything.

He just wants to fix this. He has the ability to.

Tommy turns towards Technoblade, and he tugs at his coat. "Up," He says simply, and Technoblade's sad look turns slightly amused when he brings Tommy to his chest.

"Are you tired?" Technoblade asks.

Tommy nods, and he place his head against the crook of his shoulder.

"Let's get you to bed." Technoblade says.

"Can I sleep in your room?" Tommy ends up asking, and he's frightened of seeing his room. The room he loves, has grown to love. He made that room his, made it Tommy's. He's afraid of seeing them erase that.

Technoblade hums. "Of course, Theseus." The pinkett places a soothing hand on Tommy's back. "Are you still hurt?"

Tommy shakes his head. No, he isn't. He shouldn't be hurt, because he doesn't have any injuries. He doesn't know how that came to be, but he is too tired to find out tonight.

By the time he and Technoblade arrive to his room, Tommy is already knocked out. Technoblade set Tommy gently on the bed, and places the covers on him, up to his chin, just as he likes it.

The older Prince sits beside him. The weight on the bed causes Theseus to shift slightly, turned towards Technoblade.

He places a hand on his soft blond curls, and he places a kiss on his head.

Just like his parents used to do to him, once.

He moves away, and is about to leave before the younger prince grabs his lingering hand and pulls.

Tommy's eyes open slightly, blue eyes glittering. "Stay?" He asks.

He could barely recognize the resolve shatter in Technoblade's eyes. He was too drowsy to, especially since he's spent most of today running and barely escaping the grasps of Death.

Technoblade nods, and he raises the covers so he could lay beside Tommy.

Tommy's eyes are still open by the time Technoblade was fully settled in, lying on the side, head propped up on his elbow. "Sleep, Theseus." Technoblade says.

"You'll be here when I wake up?" Tommy asks.

"I'll be here when you wake up." He affirms. "I'll be here to keep you safe, Theseus." Technoblade says.

Tommy nods, and but he turns again, shifting and wriggling so he could be against his brother's chest.

He is slowly lulled to sleep by the sound of Technoblade's heartbeat.

Technoblade shuts his eyes.

While sleep doesn't follow him quick, it eventually does reach him.

The Scarlet Throne

Chapter Summary

The Scarlet Throne. What is a throne if not a ruler's tomb?

Written by Verdaine Daivik

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The End

There is nothing left. No one.

What had beckoned him home was not the sweet song of success and unity. It was not the hope and happiness that he had hoped for when he'd brought upon this sacrifice to bring it all back. To bring them all back. He did not come home with the object of his sacrifice, with what he had traded everything for.

Because it was too late.

Even if he had continued to pray, to bide his time and wait for eons, he will not get what he came for.

It was too late.

So he'd easily let go of the decade he'd sacrificed for. She would not come home no matter what he'd sacrifice, because there will be no home to come to.

It was the Curse of Vanishing enabled, singing to him of a loss of the owner it was loyal to. It wailed a sorrowful song, a lament of a siren. He had given the both of them one, something to tell him if he had to sacrifice more years. Yet the song it sang was not for one, but for two.

How had he missed the first song?

The wanderer cannot know. He cannot bear to imagine where he had failed. He could feel the weight of his unfinished sacrifice mocking him on his shoulders, weighing heavier with every word it uttered in his ear.

He had missed the first song, and now the second will sing for two.

Too late. He'd arrived far too late. A grave faces him. One named, and full of a child he had left. One named, but empty for a child he'd lost. The wanderer wept on their graves.

He didn't think of what his sacrifice would have taken from everyone else.

He rests his head on their tomb, cold and barren. No one visits these stones. He could tell how it had been abandoned.

One more sacrifice, he begs, and the verdant god on his shoulders grin.

One more, he agreed. All of it, it demanded.

And what a simple request.

He will burn it all.

For them.

She curses his name. A mere servant she had once been. A servant of the prince, one who was so weak and unloved. She could have had it all, yet she was so easily caught. It was doomed. A trapped chest, open and welcoming but upon the act of thievery for its tempting offer has ensnared her into a trap.

Prince Theseus, she curses as she freezes. She has acquired all the gold she could keep, yet what use is such riches if she has no one to sell it to. No one to buy from. The lands are barren and not even gold can afford the mercy of warmth.

There had been no evidence, no proof, no snitches. Everyone who had once served the young prince save for the do-gooder Clara and Puffy had been sent to the damned South. Beyond the borders of the empire. Exiled.

Exile had been a political euphemism, she bets.

They had 'exiled' these servants to the Southern border, but the final desire is to kill them. No one survives in the south. Either they get killed by the enemy, or they get killed by the cold. They do not have long to live.

This servant had witnessed all of them die. She is the last one. There is a wonder as to how she is the last to stand, because she had not been the healthiest servant to be sent here. Perhaps there is a blessing in hatred. The cursed prince, beloathed. There should be reward for hating the damn thing. For hating the killer of the beloved Queen.

She scowls, curling around herself and her flimsily made home. It's cold.

But there is some mercy in her death, in her crimes.

Before her are the things that people have stolen from Prince Theseus. As the last to die, she is the one left to acquire all of them. But there is no use. It looks pretty, though.

She curses his name as she stares at her riches. She will die, but at least she shall be buried in her greed. A memory of her gluttony. The servant woman, deemed a traitor, bides her time staring at the bracelet that will not let itself go from her. It encircles around her wrist— her first act of mutiny.

Ah, maybe it was a worthy death. To steal such a pretty thing with only the consequence of death.

There's some warmth to the thing, but not enough to remove the permanent defection that the cold has on her skin. It pulsates a comforting warmth, however.

It almost cradled her in her death.

But alas, the cold finally claimed her.

The carcass does not notice how the bracelet wrapped around her frail limb disappears,

And how the song of vanishing is heard by one man.

A wanderer hears the song. He sits up, turning his head from the Vallestosa. He could hear the verdant leaves calling for his attention, screaming at him for his promised. Threats are thrown, but there is no greater threat than the meek song that had entered his ears.

The jewel has snapped.

Fear curls around his heart—

Something has happened to his youngest.

Chapter End Notes

Vallestosa is inspired in Philippine mythology's / supernatural beliefs that Balete Trees (Ficus Stipulosa) are the homes / doorways to the world of Fae

To an extent, this is also the opening / rift between the realm of mortals and the realm of what us Filipinos once deemed gods.

I wonder what this means?

Who's the wanderer? Eh, it doesn't seem important. It's not like he'd be making an appearance til the next arc ;)

ANYWAY SPECIAL UPDATE!! We hit 5k kudos!! OMG TYSM

I have an update planned later, it'd be more like our regular chapters this time dw
WHEEZE

For those who are wondering wtf is going on and you want to know, join the discord server WHEEZE I've released hugeasf spoilers regarding Scarlet Throne, Prince of Song, and the worldbuilding in this fic. Here's a link: [Garden](#).

(Not An Update) Going Forward

Chapter Summary

If you want a TLDR, read the end of the chapter.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

February 27, 2024

Hello. I'm sorry that you have to hear about this here, or from me.

The first thing I'd like to say is that I admire Shelby for speaking out about her abuser. It had brought out the heinous attitude of one man and it had allowed others to speak up on their own experiences about it. In telling her story, she managed to spur a discussion and a safe opening for those who have been involved in the same shit with the same man. I've seen many people doubt that, but even more I saw many people believe in her and create this safe space to come out and talk about it.

In light of recent events, let me be frank. Wilbur hurt the people around him in a way that easily constitutes him as an abuser. Don't defend him. None of you reading this know him and neither do I, but I believe in the voices of those who ARE and HAVE BEEN, and those are Shelby, Rhana, and others who have spoken up and witnessed him FIRSTHAND. Please support them, and please listen to them. I don't know him. YOU don't know him.

And as such it should be easier for me personally to let go and cut ties. Right?

It should be. As a fan, it should be so easy, however I've bled his person into my art and into my creations. Wilbur made a character and he bled his own persona, his id and ego, into this character. I adopted this character into my story, and I've grown attached to it. I've spent years making this story, this story had been in my head for years, longer than any project I've had in my life, and this was my escapism during the pandemic and I'm sure for a lot of you this has been the same case too. It's a stab in the chest to know that someone who's become a 'staple' in your life reveals itself to be trash.

It's like if your idol had given you a mug, and it was a well loved mug until you figure out in the future that the guy who gave it to you is an asshole and every time I'd drink from the mug, the water tastes like trash, and it tastes bitter.

I digress, though. This isn't my personal diary and you guys should only be privy to a stylized version of my disturbed, silly, wretched thoughts written in silly prose and crack-fiction. This

is all you need to know for WHY I'm dropping this fic.

Point is, for this fic I cannot go on with writing it AS IT IS.

For years I've been hyping up the mug, treasuring it, using it from time to time to drink different flavors of fanfiction but from now on it will all taste bitter. In fact this fic had two specific fucking mugs-- the green one was disposable in the first place. I had plans on replacing that to begin with.

Which is to say I'm throwing out the metaphorical 'mug'.

In this story, Wilbur has been a central point-- he isn't an antagonist, but he is one of the key figures to move the plot which is why unlike Dream (yeah, he's the shitty green mug in the metaphor), doing what I want with the fic while keeping it as it is will be difficult and nigh impossible. He was supposed to be a pivotal point. He was supposed to be the 'foundation', the 'original' story. He was Jennette in Who Made Me A Princess of course it'd be hard to get rid of him. It'd be fucking impossible.

I cannot write about any iteration about Wilbur any longer. It's impossible for me to separate that man from his character because if you look at it, there are so many similarities from canon DSMP lore that it is sickening.

So it really breaks my heart to say this because I love this fanfic. It's my creation. I've got a 150k document on this fanfic, and I've got so many plans. I've made so many friends from this. But it's been a long time coming, and I haven't been updating anyway. I'm leaving this as well as any other fic containing Wilbur. I'm going to be leaving this as anonymous in the future. I won't orphan it, I won't delete it because maybe one day I'll dissociate the character from his creator and maybe I'd see the Wilbur in this fic as my own character. Maybe I'll rewrite this fanfic to focus on Bedrock Bros and Mumza and Dadza. I don't know, and I haven't decided.

It was really nice having you guys dote on this fic. It was really nice writing it.

Now just because I'm dropping this doesn't mean you get free reign on what to do with it. No, Same rules apply -- if you're going to pick this up from where I left off, feel free to but please give EXPLICIT CREDIT. Go ahead and repost it, make fanart of it, bookbind it, whatever, just don't publish this. It's not that I care, it's because this is very much based on a real, published novel so chances are likely that your ass might get sued if you tried to monetize on this lmao.

To summarize:

Wilbur is a shit fucking person. So is Dream. Don't debate on this, you won't change my mind.

No, I'm not deleting the fic.

Don't monetize on this fic.

~~Yes. This fic will be discontinued.~~

~~Goodbye.~~

Edit (February 28, 2024)

To learn more on the situation:

[Shubble's VOD \(addressing her abuser\)](#) -- from here, a lot of things have alluded to this being about Wilbur.

Her tweets: [1](#), [2](#), affirming her viewer's assumption on who it's about.

[Wilbur's Response \(addressing the 'allegations'\)](#) -- within the thread you can find his peers' response as well. For pointers, feel free to search up Billzo and Freddie's responses to this.

Unfortunately the other information I cannot find, however these are the key threads of information that I'd based my decision on.

Edit (November 10, 2024)

This fic is leaving its discontinued status and will now be undergoing minor edits as well as further updates to transition the future chapters without him. Only minor edits, because I'll be keeping Prince of Song in its original state, however I will be editing what happens to Wilbur's character so that it'll be easier to transition to the rest of the fic without him.

I'll explain more when I post the next chapter by the month ^u^

Edit (May 3 2025)

I take back what I said about 'by the month', it's really difficult to edit the fic since 1. my interest in dsmp has waned (though I still love bedrock bros), 2. suffering through med school, and 3. I've got other interests that got me in a chokehold. Sorry for those who were hoping, but this will be taking a lot more than I'd initially planned.

Anyway, this is just to not get your hopes up that I'll be back to continuing this 'soon'.

Chapter End Notes

I'll post the rest of the unuploaded, non-chronological chapters in the 'WHO THE FUCK?' series as a separate work called 'what did i miss?'. For now, this will be the last chapter of WTEFMMAF.

Thank you all for being with me for the past 3 years.

End Notes

I also decided to post this in wattpad. Idk I just wanted to HAHAAH [Link to Wattpad Here!](#)

any thoughts ? wanna see or show fanart ?? talk to me on twitter! I am [serashalala on twitter!](#)
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